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# SOLDIER'S WIFE;

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BY

G. W. M. REYNOLDS,

AUTHOR OF "KENNETH," "COURT OF LONDON," "MARY  
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# THE SOLDIER'S WIFE.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE RECRUITING SARGEANT.

We are about to introduce the reader to one of those picturesque little villages which are chiefly to be found in our agricultural districts, and without which no English landscape would be complete. As the following tale is to a considerable extent founded upon facts, we are compelled for reasons that will develop themselves in the course of the narrative, to bestow names of our own choice upon the leading characters, in order to avoid that identification of persons which would arise from maintaining their real names. For a similar reason are we led to substitute an imaginary name for that of the little village to which we have alluded: and we will therefore denominate it Oakleigh. This appellation occurs not from any motiveless caprice, but is suggested by the circumstance that in the village and its neighborhood there were some majestic oaks of four centuries' growth,—some of them still flourishing nobly—others holding up aloft a whitened crown of leafless branches above the mass of verdure which covered all their lower and larger outspreading arms. In great respect and veneration were these trees held by the villagers; and to any new-comer were they shown as the "lions" of the place.

The village, which was situated in a midland county, did not contain above a hundred houses; and these for the most part were the humble dwellings of agricultural laborers. The shops were few in number, and chiefly grouped together in the central part of the one straggling street which constituted the place. There was the apothecary's shop, with its three bottles of colored waters, its half-dozen poppy-heads, and its "poor man's plaster," all duly displayed in the window; and as Dr. Colycynth enjoyed an extensive practice amongst all the surrounding hamlets and farms, he was enabled to keep a horse and gig. On the strength of the equipage, which they occasionally spoke of as "the carriage," Mrs. Colycynth and her three daughters considered themselves very fine people indeed; and they dressed uncommonly smart—especially Miss Kitty, the second of the three sisters, and

who was also the best looking. A couple of doors off from the "doctor's" was the shop of Mr. Obadiah Bates, the village barber; but the letters painted in a very straggling form on the *facie* of his dingy, dirty, poverty-stricken establishment, magnificently described him as "hair-dresser, perfumer, and wig maker." A few pots of questionable-looking unguent labelled "Bates' superfine bear's grease" constituted his principal stock-in-trade; and a placard announced that it was "real genuine bear's-grease, made upon the spot from fine bears expressly imported by Mr. Bates for the purpose;"—although never within the memory of the oldest inhabitant of the place had such a thing as a bear been seen there, save and except on one occasion when a travelling menagerie stopped for a day in the village. However, no one disputed Mr. Bates's assertion relative to the genuine and home-made qualities of his bear's grease; and so the placard remained in the window.

Next to the barber's establishment appeared the baker's shop, where there were at least three quarters, half-a-dozen doughy-looking rolls, a couple of bags of flour, and a small pile of gingerbread nuts, always to be seen in the window. Next door was the butcher's—a very compact little shop indeed, in which it would have been inconvenient for the portly butcher himself to move about if there were more than one sheep hanging there at a time: but, generally speaking; one scrag of mutton pendent to a hook, and some bits of beet upon a board, constituted the stock which greeted the eye of the passer-by on five days out of the six. Next to the butcher's was the chandler's, or general dealer's: and there the collection was most miscellaneous—comprising red herrings and balls of twine, tea and coffee, sugar and cheese, candles and bacon, sweetstuff and hog's-lard, fire-wood and blacking-bottles, snuff and cigars, fresh and salt butter, eggs and soap, hearth-stones and craggy masses of salt, together with various other articles requisite for domestic purposes. There was a tailor's shop and a cobbler's stall; and there was a little place kept by a lone old widow who somehow or other managed to get a living by the sale of a few apples, gingerbread cakes, and lollipops, all displayed in her window so as to

be made the most of, though it would be a dear bargain if half-a-crown were given for the whole stock in trade.

Near this last-mentioned emporium of delicacies for the juvenile palate, was a small open space whereon stood the blackened remains of a cottage that had been burnt some few years previously to the date at which our tale opens, and where an old woman had perished in the conflagration. But to this occurrence we shall have to allude more particularly hereafter. Meanwhile we will proceed to observe that inasmuch as the village of Oakleigh had its shops, so it likewise possessed its little public-house; and this was distinguished by the sign of the Royal Oak. For as there were such venerable oak-trees in the place, and as the worthy individual who originally founded the public-house had some vague idea of a King having once concealed himself in an oak, these associations acting upon his loyalty, had led him to bestow upon the house the name above specified. It stood back from the road, and also apart from the other dwellings, and had a little bowling-green in the rear. It was kept by an elderly couple named Bushell; and they were reputed to draw the best ale in all the district. In the evening there would be no lack of company either in the tap-room, or in the little parlor with its clean sanded floor: but the Bushells were not people to encourage drunkenness, and therefore their establishment was considered to be a very respectable one. Besides, the public-house had become the property of the Lord of the Manor, who was himself a justice-of-the-peace; and so the Bushells were compelled to be in their guard.

The time to see the picturesque village in the perfection of its simple beauty, was in the gay Spring season, when frosts having taken their flight, every day developed some new feature of loveliness in the rural scene. Then, when the trees were covered with verdure, and myriads of blossoms were clustering on plant and bough—when the note of the thrush was heard in the hedgerows, and the carol of the lark thrilled overhead in the joyous sunshine—when the babbling rivulet flashed in those same gladdening beams and was lost in miniature cascades amongst the depths of the adjacent wood—when the stifling heat of summer was yet too far off to dry up speedily the morning dew upon leaves and flowers, or to prevent the breeze from fanning the cheek with its cool and grateful freshness—when the pure snow-drops in the little gardens seemed like ice-memorials left by the recently departed Winter—and when the modest violets shrank into half concealment beneath the hedges, while the primrose decked with their bolder charms and more obtrusive presence the mossy banks,—then was the season in which the village of Oakleigh presented its most picturesque appearance.

We must not forget to observe that close by stood the little church, almost embowered in the immense yew-trees, which, like the oaks were also of patriarchal respectability in the vegetable kingdom and from the midst of which the tapering spire was the first object that caught the view of the traveller when descend-

ing the somewhat sloping road that led to the village. Beneath the shade of those immense yews did the forefathers of the present occupants of the village sleep; and many a curious inscription, rudely or quaintly recording their virtues, might be traced upon the grave-stones. At one extremity of the churchyard stood a house of larger size, but not of more modern structure than any other in the village. A grape vine nearly covered the front, encroaching upon the space occupied by the windows; while commingling clematis and roses covered the little portico with their verdure and their flowers. We need hardly say that this was the clergyman's residence: but we may here observe that it suits us to denominate him the Rev. Mr Arden.

One more feature of the scene must we notice, ere we regularly enter upon the thread of our narrative: for any stranger visiting Oakleigh for the first time, would not fail to inquire whose mansion it was that stood upon the brow of the hill about a couple of miles distant. This mansion was a fine old country seat, situated in the midst of a spacious park where there were many of the time-honored oaks appearing in clumps, and thus dotting with their different and darker hues the bright verdure of the well-kept grounds. Numbers of tame deer roved about the park,—sometimes emerging with a sudden twinkling of their horns from behind the groups of majestic trees—sometimes drinking at the margin of the sleeping lake in which the bordering reeds or overhanging trees were reflected as in a mirror. The mansion itself was a large and irregularly built structure, with numerous out-houses, beautiful gardens, and every indication of wealth and prosperity on the part of its possessor. This was Sir Archibald Redburn, who boasted of being descended from the oldest family in the county. He possessed a large estate—and indeed the whole of the village of Oakleigh and all the surrounding farms belonged to him. He was one of those men who believe that the poor were created to be the slaves of the rich; and he always insisted upon having his own way in everything,—which his wealth and influence generally enabled him to enjoy: but if thwarted, it was whispered that Sir Archy, as the villagers called him, could be overbearing and tyrannical enough. He was about fifty years of age—was married—and had one son, a young man nearly twenty-one at the time when our tale opens. Sir Archibald also had a sister living with him—a lady some ten or eleven years younger than himself, and who had remained unmarried.

Having laid all these particulars before the reader, we may, without farther preface, enter upon our narrative. It was, then, on a beautiful evening in the month of May, 1828, that the carrier's van, which plying between two towns in different directions, passed through the village of Oakleigh, drew up at the door of the Royal Oak. Some minutes before it stopped was its approach heralded by the ringing of a little bell by the carrier himself, to give due notice of his presence; so that the hostler of the Royal Oak might be ready with the water and hay for the refreshment of the animal which came



along at a sober jog-trot pace. The arrival of the carrier's van was one of the most important incidents alike of the morning and of the evening: for when passing through in the morning, he received the various commissions which were to be executed at Middleton—the town to which he was repairing—and the fulfilment of which commissions might be expected on his return in the evening. Therefore, when his tinkling bell rang, those vill'gins who were expecting parcels came forth from their houses and repaired to the Royal Oak, where the carrier delivered whatsoever was thus awaited.

On the present occasion the van brought a passenger—an actual live passenger—and one, too, whose appearance was somewhat calculated to alarm and amaze the peaceful denizens of Oakleigh. For the individual alluded to wore a military uniform—a scarlet coat turned up with white on the tails and blue on the cuffs and collar. He had a sword and a sash; and being tall, stout, and of a certain stately pomposity of appearance, was at once set down as some officer of very high rank. Those villagers who had followed the van to the public-house to obtain their parcels, bowed most respectfully to the military gentleman, which courtesy he returned by carrying his right hand with a sweep of the arm to the front of his cap. Then, stiff and rigid as if there were no elasticity in his body, and looking as if a poker were litness in comparison, this important personage paid his fare from Middleton (amounting to eighteen-pence); and ordering his “luggage” to be brought into the public house, he faced to the right-about and marched with measured steps and straight as a line up to the door of the establishment, which he entered.

The wondering, gaping villagers looked after him until he disappeared from their view: and then they cast their eyes up the street almost expecting to see an entire regiment, of which this might be the colonel, winding its slow length into the place. But they saw nothing of the kind; and grouping themselves together, began expressing their whispered wonder who he was, and what he could want at Oakleigh. But when the “luggage,” which in so formal a manner the great man had ordered to be brought in to him, was handed to the hostler in the shape of a brown paper parcel of very moderate dimensions, the villagers, finding that this was all, and that no half-dozen trunks and boxes were to follow, began to entertain a somewhat diminished opinion of the new arrival; and the carrier being appealed to, set all doubts at rest, by informing them that the object of their interest was a sergeant, properly belonging to a depot stationed at Coventry, but who had lately been sojourning at Middleton, at which latter place he had this day secured a seat in the van as far as Oakleigh. It is true that the baker insisted that a sergeant was higher than a general, and that the cobbler placed his rank next to a captain: but Mr. Bates, the village-barber, who knew everything, and who came up at the time, speedily set them to rights upon the subject and made them comprehend what a sergeant really was.

“Yes—and if you would take my advice,” said the carrier, who having now brought out the parcels, had leisure for a few moments’ chat, “you would tell all your young men at Oakleigh to be on their guard agin that feller. It isn’t for me to speak disrespectful of any one wot wears his Majesty’s uniform: besides which, he paid me his fare and I had summut to drink on the road at his expense: but still people *will* have their own opinions—and I don’t know of any law that’s to perwent one from uttering them. So I says that you folks had better tell your young men to be on the look-out: for if that soger-chap hasn’t come to hoist at Oakleigh the same colors he has been a-wearing for a week past at Middleton, then my name isn’t painted in yaller letters on that there brick-red ground!”—and he pointed to the side of his covered van where the blazonry of which he spoke duly existed.

“What colors does he mean?” said one of the villagers to the barber, when the carrier himself had passed into the public-house to take his wonted glass of ale ere he pursued his way.

“What colors?” ejaculated Mr. Bates, who was a thin, spare man, with a wizen-face, a starveling look, a very dirty apron, and a bustling excitement of manner: “what colors? Why, they are the same to the sergeant who wears ‘em as the three balls are to a pawnbroker, the sign to an inn, or the pole to my shop. For as these indicate places, so do colors indicate the man.”

“Ah, I understand!” observed the butcher, who had hurried from his shop with his knife in one hand and his steel in the other, and who now gave the former a couple of rubs upon the latter as if he meant to sharpen it in ominous foreboding of a mischievous intent against the new-comer in the scarlet coat. “I understand now!” then, with awful solemnity of look, he added, “It’s a recruiting-sergeant!”

This announcement produced the effect of consternation upon the assembled villagers: for the group had considerably increased within the last few minutes, the report having already spread from house to house that some very important personage in a military uniform had arrived at the public-house. Few whose ears that announcement met, had not either relatives or friends in whom they were interested, and for whom their fears were at once excited lest they should be inveigled into the trammels of the recruiting-sergeant; and this feeling was followed by a simultaneous lesire on the part of those who had not as yet seen him, to catch a glimpse of the formidable personage. Those who *had* seen him, wished to see him again; and there was a general move across the little open space in front of the Royal Oak, towards the window of its parlor. A dozen glances were at once plunged into the room: and there the stately-sergeant was seen, sitting bolt upright in a Wind-or chair, with a long clay pipe in his mouth, and a quart pot of the landlord’s prime ale on the table before him.

With “eyes right,” the sergeant perceived the group at the window: but he pretended not to take the slightest notice of the circumstance that he was thus the object of so much attention. Prim, rigid, and sternly sedate, he sat in



movable, smoking his pipe; and when at the expiration of two or three minutes he did relax from his automaton position, it was merely to lift the quart pot to his lips and imbibe a long draught.

"Well," said the butcher, "if he tucks in steaks as well as he takes down beer, he will be a pretty good customer to me as long as he's in the village. Perhaps he mayn't be a bad character after all?"

"And if he eats steaks, he is sure to want rolls," said the baker, likewise having an eye to business: "so I think I shall come up presently, as usual, and take my four-penn'orth in the parlor."

"A man who wears the King's uniform, must have a clean chin," chimed in the barber; "and those fellows that are good at handling swords, can't wield razors. After all, it would be better not to show him the cold shoulder just because he is what he is. Peace and good will. There's my maxims.—And perhaps he uses bear's-grease," added Mr. Bates, in an under-tone.—"Who knows?"

Several others, who now saw that the arrival of the recruiting-sergeant might give a certain briskness to trade,—for with the presence of such an individual was associated the idea of plenty of money to fling about,—likewise expressed themselves in favor of conciliatory policy; and they accordingly dispersed with the agreement that they would come up to the Royal Oak presently to form the acquaintance of the important character who had just arrived in the village. The carrier's van proceeded on its jogging way; and the rumbling sounds of its wheels soon died in the distance. Then all was still once more in the village of Oakleigh, save and except inside the barber's shop, where this functionary was holding forth to three or four of his neighbors who dropped in to hear his opinion: for Mr. Bates was a perfect oracle at Oakleigh.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE LOVERS.

WHILE this scene had been passing in front of the village public-house, another of equal importance to the thread of our story, and of somewhat more romantic interest, was taking place at no great distance. For at the very time that the carrier's bell had begun to tinkle in the ears of the worthy denizens of Oakleigh, a young man in a laborer's garb was wending his way along the bank of the little streamlet towards the wood through which it flowed. He was about two-and-twenty years of age—tall, remarkably upright, and with nothing of the rolling slouching gait that generally characterizes the peasant. There was a certain elasticity visible in all his motions; and though his pace was now slow, his manner dejected, and his looks desponding, yet was that natural liteness of limb still apparent. Though his garb was of the humblest materials, and though he had just come from his work, yet was his person scrupu-

lously clean. It is true that on leaving the fields he had hastened to his abode to cleanse away the traces of his labor ere he set out again on his walk along the streamlet's bank; but at all times, and under all circumstances, there was an air of cleanliness and respectability about Frederick Lonsdale that seemed to invest him with a sort of superiority above his fellows. He was decidedly handsome; and there was nothing coarse nor vulgar in his features nor the expression of his countenance. Browned it was with the sun; but this contributed to the manly honesty of look characterizing the individual who earned his bread by his own toil. He had dark hair and eyes, good whiskers, and a set of teeth which any aristocrat might have envied. When he spoke, it was with no peculiar accent nor rustic drawl; and his language was marked by a singular accuracy for one in his position. There was a certain mystery attending his birth, of which we shall have to speak presently: but there was no mystery as to the way which he had been brought up—for he had lived from his infancy in the village. A widow, named Grant, had reared him. She kept a little shop which could barely have supported herself; but from some other source, not known to the villagers, she had for a time received a little additional succor. She had therefore put the boy to the day-school of the village-pedagogue, who, taking a liking to him on account of his intelligence and docility, had thought it no trouble to bestow unusual pains upon him. As Frederick Lonsdale grew up, he greedily devoured all the books that he could possibly obtain in the circumscribed world of that village: and thus had he materially added to the store of knowledge derived from the schoolmaster's slender stock. In this manner had he reached the age of eighteen, old Mrs. Grant loving him as affectionately as if he were her own son—but still no future plans appeared to be chalked out for the young man. The schoolmaster had thought of taking him for an assistant: death however interfered with this arrangement—and the pedagogue was gathered to his fathers beneath the shade of the yew-trees in the churchyard. Soon afterwards a fire broke out in Mrs. Grant's cottage one night, when Frederick Lonsdale was absent at Middleton on some commission for his aged benefactress. The place was burnt to the ground, she herself perishing in the ruins: for she was bed-ridden at the time, and the habitation being of wood, with a straw thatch, was consumed before the slightest assistance could be rendered her. Thus whatever secret this woman might have cherished in respect to Frederick's birth, appeared to have died with her, and on his return to the village he found himself deprived of his only friend—homeless and penniless. As a matter of course he experienced sympathy and temporary assistance on the part of the kind-hearted villagers: but they were too poor to help him for any length of time; and his spirit was too proud to permit him to remain a burthen upon their kindness. He therefore at once resolved to work for his own living. Another schoolmaster had succeeded his own deceased preceptor; and consequently there was no opening for the exercise of Frederick's talents in this sphere.

There were plainly two alternatives before him: one was to go and seek his fortune elsewhere—the other was to remain in the village and become a farm-laborer. He would have done the former, had not there been a certain tie which bound him to Oakleigh: and so he adopted the latter alternative. He had since the death of his benefactress occupied a lodging—that is to say, one small room at the little house of Mr. Bates the barber; and he had worked for Sir Archibald Redburn, of Redburn Manor. He bore a most excellent character in the village, although he was generally considered to be his own enemy in one respect: namely, that he had a spirit somewhat impatient of control, and never cringed nor played a fawning part towards the baronet or the clergyman, both of whom were such high and mighty people in the eyes of those humble villagers. We may add that the blackened ruins alluded to at the opening of our tale were the remains of the unfortunate Mrs. Grant's cottage.

The reader has now learnt as much as it is necessary for us to tell him in respect to Frederick Lonsdale, whom we must accordingly accompany in his walk along the bank of the little river. He soon reached the wood; and still following the course of the stream beneath the shade of the over-arching trees, he in a few minutes reached the rude bridge which spanned the stream. There he was very shortly joined by a young woman of whom we must say something. Lucy Davis was the daughter of Sir Archibald Redburn's bailiff. She was twenty years of age, and exceedingly beautiful. Tall and well made, there was a certain air of gentility about Lucy which raised her above the ordinary average of the rustic maidens, as Frederick himself was superior to the peasant youths of the district. She had dark brown hair of singular richness and luxuriance: her eyes were of the deepest blue, and the brows handsomely arched. The hues of health were upon her cheeks; and the smiles of innocent happiness were generally upon her lips. Sweeter lips were never seen; and when parting, they displayed a faultless set of teeth. She was dressed with the utmost neatness, but plainly and simply: yet did her apparel set off the admirable contours of her shape more attractively than the richest raiment could have done. Though what may be termed a well-grown young woman, her symmetry was perfect,—the slope of the shoulders, the fulness of the bust, the slenderness of the waist, and the sweeping length of limb, all combining to render her a model for a sculptor's study.

Such was Lucy Davis. And now the reader can be no longer at a loss to understand the nature of that secret tie which had bound Frederick Lonsdale to the village. He and Lucy had long loved each other. In childhood they were frequently playmates; and as they grew up, the friendship of earlier years ripened into a sincere and profound attachment. But wherefore have we spoken of the tie binding Frederick to Oakleigh as a secret one? Because he had never avowed his love for Lucy to her father. Mr. Davis, being comparatively in good circumstances, had loftier views on behalf of his

daughter: indeed his ambition had soared so high that he had flattered himself her exceeding beauty might even captivate Gerald Redburn, the Baronet's only son and heir. Of course, in making this calculation, Mr. Davis knew perfectly well that Sir Archibald would never willingly consent to such a match: but the estates were entailed, and when young Gerald should come of age, he might do as he liked and snap his fingers at his father. So thought the bailiff: and from these simple facts the reader may at once gather that he was an unprincipled and an unscrupulous man. Such indeed he was; and being of so designing a character, was not without a consummate dissimulation to conceal it. He was a widower—Lucy was his only child—and he hoped that by seeing her become “a lady,” he might, with a sort of borrowed reflection of the lustre of rank, come to dub himself “a gentleman.”

On the evening in question, Frederick Lonsdale and Lucy Davis met at the bridge a little before the sunset hour—that hour which exercises a two-fold influence upon the minds of lovers, either lulling them into a serenity of bliss when their loves are prosperous, or else weighing upon them with a saddening despondency when the course of their affection runs not smooth. Yes—they met at that bridge where they had often and often met before, and at that same hour which had likewise so frequently marked these past meetings. It was with a light elastic step and with smiles upon her beauteous countenance, that Lucy tripped across the bridge, to join her lover; and in the first gush of pleasure at the meeting, she did not perceive the sadness which sat upon his brow. Perhaps, too, his countenance suddenly brightened up as he folded her in his arms: but the transient sense of joy at thus straining his well-beloved to his heart, was quickly succeeded by a feeling of bitterness in consequence of what was lying heavy upon his soul.

Hand in hand they walked along the bank of the river, proceeding deeper into the wood; and any one who had beheld them then, would have at once arrived at the conclusion that there was an admirable fitness in the union of this handsome couple. The coarse garments of Frederick would have been lost sight of in the contemplation of his fine form, his upright gait, his manly walk, and his intellectual countenance: and indeed, if he had found time to put on his Sunday garb ere coming to this appointment, there would have been no circumstance, so far as the outward appearance of the two lovers went, to raise a suspicion that there was an inequality of social grades which appeared to present an insuperable bar to their union.

They had not proceeded very far, when Lucy, in making some observation, bent her beautiful eyes upon Frederick, and was struck by the sadness of his looks. She suddenly stopped short in what she was saying,—stopped short also on the bank of the stream; and gazing upon him in silent earnestness for nearly a minute, said in tones as liquid as the musical flow of the crystal waters themselves, “Frederick—dear Frederick, something has occurred? You are unhappy!”

“I cannot conceal it from you, beloved Lucy,”



answered the young man. "I have been insulted—cruelly insulted—almost trampled upon by one whom the accident of birth has made what the world calls my superior."

"Who has done this?" inquired Lucy, suddenly becoming painfully excited; and the tears started out upon the long dark lashes which shaded her deep blue eyes.

"Gerald Redburn," returned Frederick. "When I think of what took place I am surprised that I restrained my hand from tearing him off his horse and spurning him at my feet. I should have done so perhaps; but, miserable enfeebled stripling as he is, it would have been a coward's blow on my part. And yet I was bitterly provoked!"

"Yes, dear Frederick, you must have been—you must have been—to talk thus and to feel so deeply too. Oh!" exclaimed the generous-hearted and devoted girl, "what can I say—what can I do to console you? Ah! methinks that if I had been ever so much provoked, yet that in your society I should experience a soothing solace?"—then, as if she had said too much for maiden modesty, she bent down her eyes, blushing deeply.

"Oh! a thousand thanks, dearest Lucy, for this spontaneous assurance of the extent of your love!"—and Frederick Lonsdale pressed her hand to his lips. "Yes, dearest, I also should feel every possible consolation in your sweet company—your sympathy would pour a balm into the heart to heal the wounds of any depth and poignancy. But it is not the mere sense of terrible insult which now oppresses me: it is also the fear of a sad, sad change in my circumstances, poor as they already are!"

"What mean you, dear Frederick?" inquired Lucy, with a startled look of fresh apprehension.

"I mean, beloved girl," was Lonsdale's excited reply, "that the insolent Gerald, not contented with flinging at me the bitterest taunts, has threatened to deprive me of my bread. He has vowed that I shall work for his father no longer, and that he will take sufficient measures to prevent me from obtaining employment at the hands of any tenant of Sir Archibald's. Such a cruelty, if carried out, would amount, dear Lucy, to a sentence of exile from the village: and that it *will* be carried out, I have, alas! the too painful conviction."

The excitement of anxiety dying away from Lucy's countenance, was succeeded by a look of deep dejection; and for upwards of a minute there was a pause, during which the lovers walked with the slow pace of sadness along the bank of the stream. At length Lucy again stopped short, saying somewhat abruptly, "You have not told me, dear Frederick, the nature of this quarrel between yourself and Mr. Redburn."

"You know, dear Lucy—for we have frequently spoken on the subject before—that I am no very great favorite with Sir Archibald or his son—nor yet with the Rev. Mr. Arden; and I think it is because I have been decently educated, and have added as well as I could to my little stock of knowledge. People in high life don't like humble persons, such as I am, to have much learning: they think it opens our eyes to the injustice of the system which keeps the mil-

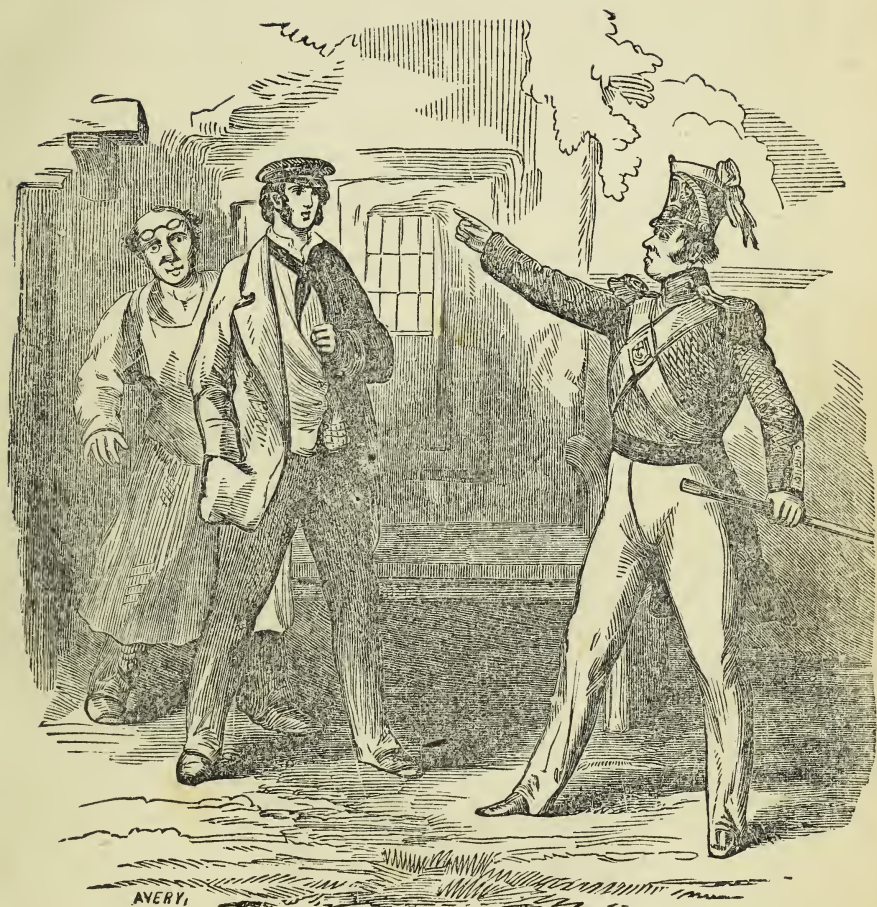
lions poor that the few may be rich;—and because I have been heard to say so, I have been accused, as you know, by Sir Archibald and Mr. Arden, of disseminating seditious ideas amongst the villagers. Yet, heaven knows how seldom I have obtruded my opinions upon others; and not frequenting the public-house, I have no opportunity, nor do I seek it, of interfering with the sentiments of my fellow-villagers. However, it is known that I have once or twice spoken in that sense; and it has struck me for at least two years past that the baronet and the parson would be very glad to get me out of the village."

"But you are such a general favorite, my dear Frederick," said Lucy, gazing up fondly and admiringly in her lover's countenance, "that they would not dare outrage general opinion by any open and unprovoked act of tyranny."

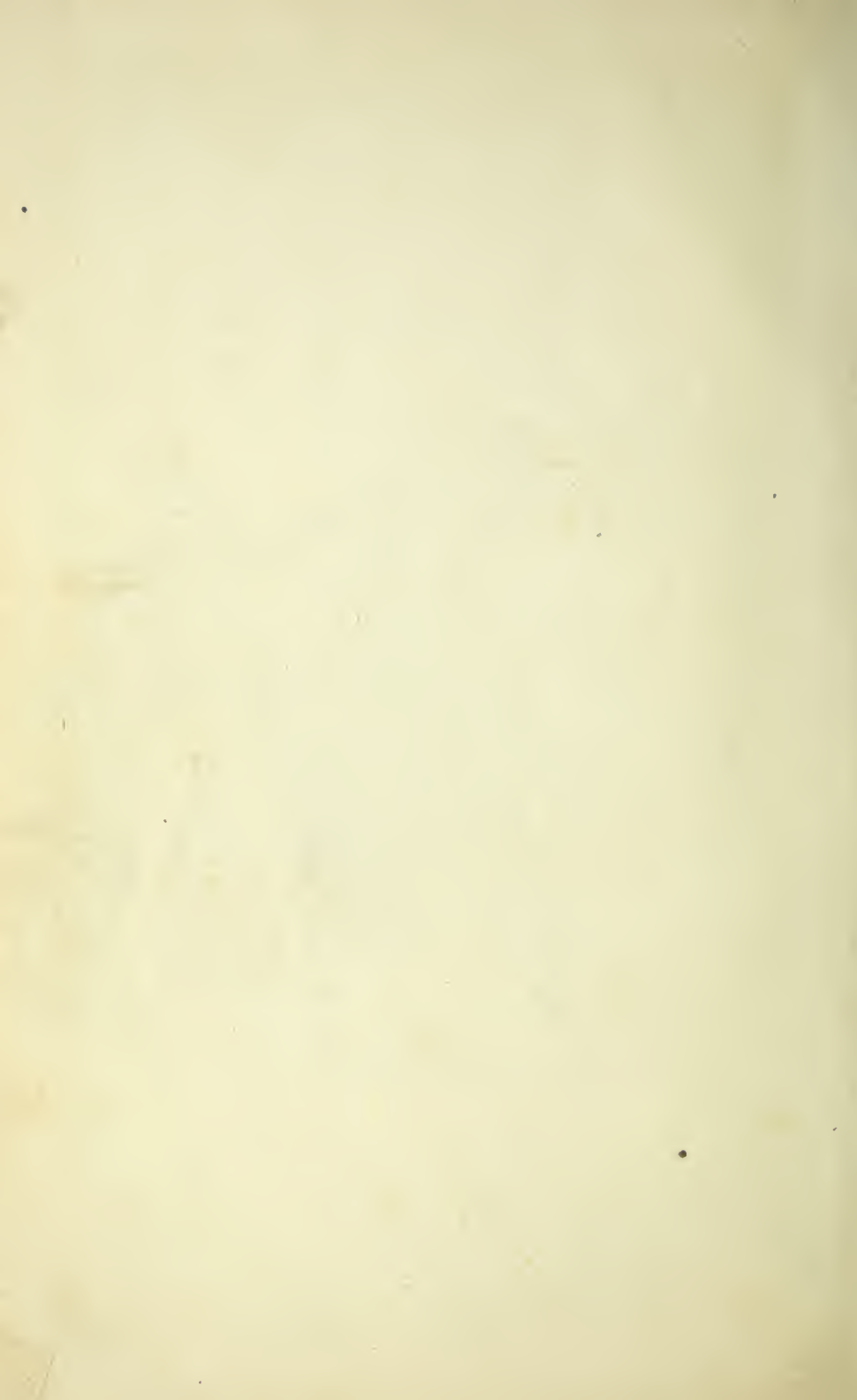
"That is the exact truth of the case, dear Lucy," exclaimed Frederick. "But now, I fear me, the opportunity does present itself, and the tyranny will be exercised. I will however come to the point. This afternoon I was working in the field up by the plantation yonder, when Mr. Redburn rode by on horseback. I touched my hat as a matter of course; but he took no notice of me. Ever since his return home from Oxford he treated me in this bawdy manner: but I can assure you it gave me not much concern—for I was resolved to avoid as far as possible affording the slightest opportunity for the visitation of the tyranny which I nevertheless apprehended. Well, Gerald Redburn, who was riding unattended, passed along the lane; and presently I heard him crying out in his weak sickly voice, 'I say, you fellow Lonsdale, come here!'—My first thought was to disobey a command so imperiously given; but curbing my annoyance, and true to my resolve not to suffer myself to be easily provoked, I hurried to the spot where he had halted. Pointing with his kid gloved finger upon the ground, Gerald Redburn said, 'Pick up that riding-whip.'—If I had been the vilest of dogs, he could not have addressed me in a more brutal overbearing manner. I felt the color mounting to my face; and I recollect that I threw upon him a look of irrepressible indignation. He saw it at once, and flying into a rage, exclaimed, 'You beggarly clod hopper, make haste and do as I tell you. Pick up that whip, I say, or I shall jump off and lay it about your shoulders.'—'Mr. Redburn,' said I, mastering my feelings as well as I possibly could, 'I would do anything I can to serve you if you only speak civilly.'—Thereupon he levelled a bitter imprecation at me—an imprecation which sounded shocking indeed when coming from the lips of a young gentleman; and he renewed his command that I should pick up the whip instantaneously. Lucy, I could no longer control myself—"

"No, Frederick," said the young damsel, her cheeks now flushed with the crimson glow of indignation at the bare idea of the treatment which her lover had experienced: "I can well understand that you lost all patience then; and it would even have shown a lack of spirit if you had tamely submitted. But proceed. What followed?"





AVERY,



"Mr. Redburn's rage grew ungovernable: his pale sickly countenance became livid, his lips turned ashy white, and he poured forth a volley of abuse, to repeat which would shock your ears. Suffice it to say that he taunted me with my ignorance respecting my parentage—said that he had no doubt I was some beggar's brat who had been abandoned at Widow Grant's door—and that instead of being inflated with pride because I was able to read and write and had got a smattering of learning, I ought to be ready to fall upon my knees and kiss the ground upon which my betters walked. I listened until he had finished his tirade; and then I remonstrated with him upon the impropriety of his conduct. But still I allowed his riding-whip to remain on the ground where he had dropped it. My words, and my demeanor too, I suppose, almost maddened him; and finding that I would not stoop to pick up his whip he gave vent to the threats which I have before described. Therefore, dear Lucy, I suppose I must expect to be summarily dismissed from my employment; and it will be your father, my poor girl, who will have to pronounce my discharge."

"Alas! Frederick, these are indeed ill tidings," said Lucy. "What is to be done? Shall I throw myself at my father's feet, confess that I love you and beseech him if he would not plunge me into wretchedness, to listen to my prayer?"

"Not for worlds, dearest Lucy," responded her lover, "would I have you draw down upon your head the explosion of your father's wrath. No, no—I will keep all my calamities unto myself: they shall not redound upon you, sweet Lucy," he continued in a deeper and more solemn tone, but with a look that was far more eloquent than his words. "I have this day awakened from a dream of bliss. Hitherto I have cherished the hope that fortune would develop some turn in my favor, so that I might acquire a position that would enable me to claim your hand. I have been mad—yes, absolutely mad, to harbor such an idea: and yet it was because I loved you so fondly—and love itself is hope! Ah! Lucy! you know not the extent of my love for you. You never have known, because my lips could not speak all that my heart feels or that my soul thinks. This stream at the spot where we are now standing, makes no noise: it does not even ripple here: yet this is its deepest part for all its stillness—and my love is like it. It is this love which has cheered me in my daily toils, and has been a sufficient companion for me in the evening when my work was over. If ever I have been tempted to go to the ale house it has kept me back; and when at times I have thought of the hardness of my lot, and that there was some secret connected with my birth which if known, would not perhaps leave me poor and obscure as I am,—your image has arisen before me and I have felt consoled and even cheered. Such, Lucy, has been my love; and such too has been the good influence your image has shed over me."

The damsel was now weeping bitterly, as she clung to her lover's arm; and gazing up fondly through the dimness of her tears into his countenance she endeavored to give utterance to a

few words—but the strength of her emotions choked her utterance and she could not.

"Do not weep, dear Lucy—do not weep," said Lonsdale: and yet he himself swept his manly hand over his eyes. "I feel that there is a time coming when we shall have need of all our fortitude: indeed the time *is* come, Lucy—and we must look our position calmly and resolutely in the face. I am a man almost without hope—poor and self-dependent—perhaps marked out as a victim to be crushed. Think you then, dearest, that I will in any way drag you down into the vortex with me? No—not for worlds! By the immensity of my love may you estimate the immensity of the sacrifice that it prompts me to make. For my love is not all self-interest: it is of a nature which leads me to place your happiness high above my own, and to consult your welfare first of all."

"What do you mean, Frederick? Your words terrify me!"—and Lucy gazed upon him with a half-frightened half-deprecating regard.

"I mean, beloved girl, that it is wrong—it is even wicked for me to keep you entangled by vows and pledges which in your affection you have given, but which must lead to naught. In a word, Lucy, it were better that we should part—that you should study to forget me—that you should learn to think of me no more—"

"Enough, Frederick—enough—I cannot bear this!" and the poor girl wrung her hands in a sort of frenzy: but almost instantaneously recovering her fortitude, she fixed her earnest gaze upon him; and with the flush of a proud triumph upon her cheeks—the reflection of an inward glow of satisfaction at what she was about to say—she added in a voice that was calm and clear, "I will not insult you, Frederick, with the suspicion that you are seeking a release from the vows which we have mutually pledged. We have known each other from childhood; and I am too well acquainted with the truthfulness of your heart and the nobility of your nature, to entertain so injurious a thought. Listen then, while I call heaven to witness that happen what may—no matter how far your enemies may succeed in persecuting you—no matter to what distance circumstances may separate you from me—no matter what views my father may have in store for me—and no matter who may seek my hand,—my love for you will remain unchanged—my constancy shall continue firm unto death! Now, Frederick, I have said it; and my heart feels as if relieved of a weight which for half-an-hour past, had sat heavily upon it."

"Dearest Lucy, what can I say—what words can I find to express all the fervor of that gratitude which I feel for such a proof of undying affection as this? No, Lucy—I will *not* reject the hope which has hitherto inspired me—I will *not* suffer my spirit to sink beneath the weight of despondency. Oh! there must indeed be something divine in woman's love if it can shed upon the soul such cheering influences as those which your words have shed upon mine! Lucy, I accept this holy troth—and I respond to it in a vow of equal sanctity."

The lovers appeared suddenly to have forgotten all their cares: and with their arms thrown round each other's neck, they indulged in a fond



embrace. At that instant an ejaculation of mingled astonishment and rage fell upon their ears: and starting asunder, they stood in a kind of guilty confusion in the presence of the individual who had just emerged from the depths of the wood. This was Mr. Davis, Lucy's father.

"Vile deceitful girl!" he exclaimed: "is it for this that those frequent evening walks of your's have been taken? But you, villain," he added, now turning his wrathful looks upon Lonsdale, "how dare you thus seek to rob me of my daughter?"

"Mr. Davis," was the immediate answer given by Frederick, who quickly recovered his presence of mind, "it is an honest love I bear your daughter—a love which, mutually felt, has ripened from our childhood's years——"

"No more!" ejaculated the bailiff, the naturally harsh tones of his voice sounding more sternly harsh than ever: "not another word upon the subject! Come hither, girl!"—and clenching his daughter violently by the arm, he drew her towards him. "You will come home with me, and I will take care to put an end to your rambles. As for you, Lonsdale, I have but a few words to say. I was proceeding to your lodging for the purpose of telling you that by Sir Archibald Redburn's command you are to seek employment elsewhere. Here is a fortnight's wages for you; and the sooner you get out of the village, the better."

As he thus spoke, the bailiff tossed some silver in half-crowns at the feet of Frederick, who was standing about three yards distant: and then suddenly turning round, he dragged his daughter away with him. She threw a look upon Frederick which more eloquently than words could have done, seemed to remind him of the vow that had so solemnly passed her lips; and ere she turned her head again, she caught in mute response the dimness of his parting smile.

He remained rivetted to the spot, gazing after the retreating forms of the bailiff and his daughter: then, as they speedily disappeared from his view, he turned abruptly round and plunged into the thickest of the wood, there to give way to the anguish that filled his heart. But the money which Davis had so contemptuously flung down, was left unheeded upon the bank.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE ALE-HOUSE PARLOR.

It was nine o'clock—the blind was drawn down in the parlor of the Royal Oak—the candles were lighted upon the table—and there was a much larger attendance of guests than usual. At least a dozen persons were seated around the room, puffing their pipes, and enjoying Mr. Bushell's good ale. This individual himself sat on one side of the fire-place—his accustomed corner during the twenty years he had been landlord of the Royal Oak; and although there was no fire in the grate in that warm spring season, "mine host" nevertheless re-

mained faithful to his wonted location. Opposite to him, in the other corner, sat Sergeant Langley—the object of all interest and the cynosure of attraction. Prim and stately after his own fashion, the sergeant could not possibly unbend in respect to his body, however much he might in the gravity of his looks or the pompous severity of his speech. We have already said he was a tall and somewhat stoutly built man: we may add that he had a red face—hair cropped quite short, and deficient on the upper part of the forehead—and small twinkling gray eyes, which, if closely looked into, had a cunning, disagreeable, and even reptile-like expression. He had very little whiskers: and being an infantry soldier, wore no moustache. His age appeared to be about five-and-forty: but it might very well have been three or four years more,—for he was a man who evidently wore well.

The sergeant was smoking his pipe, but all the time holding forth with so little intermission, that the volatile and bustling barber, Mr. Bates, could scarcely manage to get in a word edgewise. There was something supremely ludicrous in the attitude and look of the little shaver, as he sat bending forward on the edge of his chair, with eyes as keenly fixed upon Sergeant Langley as if it were a cat watching a mouse: but Mr. Bates was watching for the slightest pause in the soldier's discourse that might afford him an opportunity of giving utterance to his own opinion. Indeed, so exasperating was the anxiety of Barber Bates to get in a word, that his half-smoked pipe had been suffered to go out and remain idle in his hand, while his pint of ale stood also untouched on the table before him. It was evident too, that Sergeant Langley was quite aware of his new friend's intention of pouncing as it were upon the conversation, and the moment he got a fair gripe, monopolizing it all to himself: for the wily soldier studiously avoided giving the barber any such chance.

The butcher, the baker, the general-dealer, the tailor, the shoemaker, the parish clerk, the sexton, and the other leading men of the village, were all assembled on the occasion; and the greater portion of them were listening with wide-open eyes and pricked-up ears to the marvellous stories that the sergeant was telling them. Of course Mr. Langley had a particular object to serve; and he managed matters with wonderful tact and astuteness. He had to beat down the prejudices that existed against a soldier's life—to make the sense of its dangers merge into a feeling of patriotic enthusiasm—to gloss over its privations, its vicissitudes, and its degrading punishments—and in short, to create a paradise where the previous impression was that a dreary desert existed. Of course the sergeant could not deal in truths while thus expatiating; and to say that his imagination was largely drawn upon, would only be to tell the reader something already suspected. There is a common phrase about "shooting with the long bow;" but certainly Sergeant Langley not only shot with one of the longest bows ever put into requisition, but handled it likewise without the least clumsiness or want of dex-

terity. It was not that he expected to obtain any recruits amongst the company now present; and even if he so expected, none of them would have suited—for the butcher was too stout, the barber too thin, the baker too short, the sexton too tall, the clerk too old, the general-dealer too bandy-legged, the tailor too humpbacked, the shoemaker too bow-legged, and the rest equally incapacitated in a physical sense from passing muster. Therefore the wily sergeant had not his eye upon any of the guests now present: but he had their prejudices to disarm, so that their influence might not be used to prevent any of the athletic, healthy, strong built young rustics on whom he *did* have an eye (though there were now none of them present) from accepting the King's money and pinning the various colored ribands to their caps.

"Talk of the hardships of a soldier's life?" said Mr. Langley, as if in contemptuous deprecation of a besotted prejudice: "why it's the most beautiful state of existence that can possibly be conceived. Here you have your great lords and wealthy gentlemen paying large sums of money out of their own pockets to travel on the Continent and see the fine things there; but the soldier travels to the most distant parts of the earth at no expense of his own. His Sovereign pays for him. Think of that, gentlemen—only think of that, I say! What an honor to have your Sovereign take such an interest as to pay your travelling expenses! I tell you, gentlemen, I am blowed up with pride when I think that for thirty years of my life—for I entered the service young, gentlemen, as a drummer—I have seen all parts of the world at the expense of my King and my country. It's a great thing to say, gentlemen—a great thing: and if any body has a word to urge against it, I tell him he doesn't know what an honor is, gentlemen—and he may put *that* in his pipe and smoke it!"

Here the sergeant paused for a moment and looked uncommonly fierce, while the little barber rushed frantically in to the temporary void in the discourse, with "But I say, though—"

"Yes, gentlemen," continued Mr. Langley, making a majestic motion with his pipe to the unfortunate village shaver to enjoin him to silence, "it is all truth that comes from my lips. A man, gentlemen, who wears a coat of *this* color, never tells a lie. But about the hardships of a soldier's life—I should just like to ask one question. Is not the soldier adored by the fair sex? don't women's smiles and their bright eyes beam upon him? Why, gentlemen, there's never a female heart that doesn't go pit-a-pat at the sight of a uniform. Take care, gentlemen—you have got wives and daughters, aunts and grandmothers—and they will have an eye upon *me*. But if any of you do ask me to take pot-luck with you, I shan't abuse confidence: a soldier's honor, gentlemen, is paramount. Well then, as I was saying, the soldier travels for nothing—and his loves cost him nothing. Then his clothes—the witching raiment that commits such havoc among the fair sex—it's all paid for. The soldier, gentlemen, is like the lily of the field: he toils not, neither does he spin. As for his meals, he has them as regular

as clock-work: and who ever heard of a soldier with a bad digestion? Show me such a thing gentlemen—and I will have him labelled and put into a museum as a curiosity. There's nothing like regularity of meals: all doctors will tell you that. In respect to exercise, what can be more agreeable than the parade-ground, where all your steps are measured and you don't go either too fast or too slow. That's the sort of exercise for me, gentlemen! Then the barrack-room—what a scene of delight. *There* is true comfort without the encumbrances of fashion—true enjoyment without being afraid to spoil the furniture. Always plenty of companions—sprightly conversation going on—and everything gentlemen, to contribute to the tranquil and easy flow of the spirits. As for the officers—a nicer, kinder set of men can't exist—hail fellow well met with all the privates *in* private, though reserved and distant in public. Now look at me, gentlemen. You see me well—I have the honor to be an officer in the King's service—"

"A non-commissioned officer!" vociferated the little barber, determined to edge in a word this time and show that he understood the distinction of ranks.

"Yes, sir,—a non-commissioned officer," echoed the sergeant, with stately pomposity; "and though perhaps not quite so high as the colonel, yet not very far off. Well, gentlemen, such as you see me, I am not proud—I never give myself airs to the privates—I encourage them, gentlemen—I patronize them, gentlemen—I cheer them on, gentlemen; and if they want a friend, gentlemen, they know whom to apply to. What can be more beautiful than this? We are like a community of brothers. Ah, I know very well what thought strikes you now: you know there is such a thing as flogging? Well, let me tell you, gentlemen, strange though it may seem, that it's a very delightful process: it's an excitement, gentlemen—produces an agreeable change—gives a healthy action to the circulation—causes an issue for all humors that would otherwise corrode the whole vital system—and leaves behind it such a glow that one feels just as if one had come out of a vapor-bath. But that is not all, gentlemen," added Sergeant Langley; and now he suffered his voice to sink into a grave solemnity: "it purifies the heart—it chastens the soul—it reminds the soldier that great though he is, he is but a mortal after all; and I am sure that *you*, gentlemen as good citizens—as fathers of families—as husbands—and as moral men, will admit that these are truly beneficial effects. But let me tell you one thing, gentlemen: I never knew a man who when he had been flogged once, didn't come back to the triangle to be flogged a dozen times again: and if *that* don't prove, gentlemen, that the men themselves know it to be good for *them*, then I am done and won't say another word."

"But," ejaculated the barber, bounding on his chair in his excited eagerness to speak: "but—"

"One moment, sir,—and you shall have your say, which I have no doubt will be a very clever one when do you get it. I think, gentlemen, you will confess that I have made out a strong case. We must hear no more of the hardships



of a soldier's life. Why, it's like sailing through existence upon a river of rose-water, with only just the trouble of plucking the fruits that grow upon the bank. And consider, gentlemen, the glory of the thing! Why, this hand, gentlemen, which now holds this bakker-pipe, has done its work; and though I say it, which shouldn't say it, I have slain the ruthless foemen, gentlemen, that would have invaded our shores—would have marched into the peaceful village of Oakleigh—would have pillaged your houses—carried off your wives—devoured your substance—and taken away everything you have in your shops. I, therefore, gentlemen—humble an individual as I am—by slaying with my own hand sixty-seven of your mortal enemies at Waterloo, and disabling ninety-five more, contributed to the salvation of all your goods and chattels.”

When we come to reflect of what might be the probable value of the scrag of mutton at the butcher's, the cheese and blacking-bottles at the chandler's, the pots of bear's-grease at the barber's, and the rolls and gingerbread-nuts at the baker's, it must certainly appear that if all that blood was shed just for the special protection of the little village of Oakleigh, as the worthy sergeant sought to make it appear, the cost of human life was considerably above that of the commodities thus saved from the ruthless hands of an enemy bent on projects of invasion and pillage. But the village tradesmen, there and then assembled, did *not* pause to make any such calculations, but looked deeply grateful, the barber not excepted, for the services rendered by the mighty arm of the heroic sergeant.

“Talk of the hardships of a soldier's life,” he went on to say,—“let me tell some of its pleasures. What is there like seeing the world? and who sees more of it than the soldier? Why, gentlemen, I have been in countries the beauties and the wonders of which you, perhaps, intelligent though you all are, don't dream of. Perhaps you have heard of the cow-tree, that has only to be tapped and it yields a delicious milk. Well, gentlemen, in that same island there's another kind of tree which when tapped yields a beer just for all the world like this ale that we are drinking now; and the beauty of it is, it doesn't make you drunk, so that you may enjoy yourself as much as you like. And now another thing, gentlemen. Of course you know that the Aldermen of the City of London are very fond of turtle soup, and that it's a great luxury? Why, gentlemen, I have been in countries where the turtles are so numerous that the beach and the sea-shore are composed entirely of them instead of stones, and the whole regiment at last got so sick of turtle soup that they were compelled to eat parrots, and peacocks, and cockatoos, and humming-birds by way of a change. That's what I call living, gentlemen! Do you mean to tell me that any City Alderman can beat this? Well, but there's another thing. I dare say you are all very fond of fine fruit? Now, I have been in countries where the hedges are all grape-vines covered with the most luscious grapes; and all the trees by the road sides are actually breaking down with fruit. Well, perhaps you meet a beggar, and he tells you he is starving. You ask him in wonder

why he doesn't blow himself out with any of these delicious fruits? at which he will turn up his nose, make a horrid grimace, and tell you he is so surfeited with fruit that he would rather die than eat any more. Those are countries to live in, gentlemen!”—and the sergeant looked slowly round upon his amazed and delighted audience.

“But, my dear sir, pray permit me,” now interjected the barber: “just one word——”

“I know what you are going to say, my friend,” at once observed the sergeant: “you are going to ask me about the fruits in other parts of the world? Perhaps you are all fond of cocoanuts: but what you get in England are nothing compared to those you find abroad. They would be mere wood-nuts there. I have seen cocoanuts as large as the big drum of the regiment; and the kernel is all solid and comes out like an enormous Christmas plum-pudding, so that you cut out large slices and eat it. As for vegetables, you never saw anything in England equal to the vegetables that grow in foreign countries. There's the cabbage tree, for instance, all covered with beautiful summer-cabbages; and by a curious dispensation of nature, the same country that produces these cabbage-trees, also abounds in the finest pigs, quite tame, and which by constantly bathing in the sea get a salt flavor—so that you have nothing to do but to kill a pig, cut off the part you fancy, then cut a cabbage from the trees, put it all into a pot, and in due time you have a delicious dinner of pickled pork and greens with not a farthing to pay. I don't think you can beat this in England, gentlemen.”

There was a simultaneous shake of the head, as much as to say, “We should think not!”—and the barber again endeavored to get a hearing, but could not quite succeed.

“These little trifles I have been telling you, gentlemen,” resumed Sergeant Langley, “are just the recollections that come uppermost in my mind at the moment: but if seeing and enjoying such things as these, are hardships, then a soldier's life is a very hard one indeed. Do you know, friend landlord,” continued the sergeant, turning to old Bushell, “what first gave the idea of milk-punch in England? I will tell you. It's that cow-tree I was speaking of just now. In very hot weather the milk in the upper branches all ferments and turns into alcohol: so that the spirit, mixing with the milk that keeps fresh in the trunk of the tree, make the most delicious milk-punch, you ever tasted. That *does* get up into your head—I believe you, it does! The first day my regiment landed in that island, we every one of us, from the colonel down to the drummer-boys, tapped the cow-trees; and it being in the height of the hot season, the trees all yielded milk-punch. So the whole regiment got blind drunk, and lay stretched upon the ground for twelve hours, fast asleep, 'till the effects wore off. Of course there was no court-martial, because we were all in the same mess—but it's astonishing how soon we all got well—for close by there was a fountain, and when we came to drink, it proved to be the most delicious soda-water we ever tasted in all our lives. The fact was that the fountain gushed up from the heart of a chalky soil, and the confined air made

It beautifully effervescent. So you see, gentlemen, the wise provision of nature—that if it produces trees which make you drunk, it provides soda-water close at hand to make you sober again.”

Here the sergeant, although his lungs were almost of leathern durability, was compelled to pause for a few minutes, to recover breath and slake his thirst with the remnants of the ale in his quart pot. The village-barber therefore at length found the long-wished for and eagerly-ought opportunity of making himself heard.

“My friends,” he said, with the air of a man who had fully made up his mind for a set speech, “I do think we ought to be grateful to our new companion for the interesting information he has given us. But when he speaks of the beauties of a soldier’s life, and tells us how the soldier travels, eats, drinks, sleeps, and has clothes for nothing, I should like to ask what is meant by *stoppages*, and how much he gets in the shape of hard cash for his own use and benefit? I would farther ask, gentlemen—”

“One question at a time,” interrupted the sergeant, now fully refreshed and prepared for another campaign in the fields of discourse. “I am asked, gentlemen, about the soldier’s pay: and I hear something about *stoppages*. I should as soon of thought of hearing about ghosts and hob goblins. There is no such thing as *stoppages*. It’s a weak device of the enemy to prevent the aspiring and patriotic youth of England from entering in this most glorious service. *Stoppages* indeed! it’s a vulgar prejudice. The ‘British soldier, sir,’ added Sergeant Langley, drawing himself up to the very fullest of his portly height and assuming the stateliest of mien, as he fixed his eyes upon the barber,—“the British soldier, sir, receives his thirteen pence a-day, which he has all to himself for beer and bakker. Money, gentlemen, is not wanting in the army. We don’t know how to spend our money: we have too much of it. It’s my opinion our Sovereign is too liberal; and I do think, gentlemen, you have a right to complain of the taxes when so much goes into the pockets of your soldiers. Look here, for instance, gentlemen:”—and Mr. Langley pulled out a handful of silver, with a few sovereigns and a still greater number of half-pence intermixed. “But this is nothing,” he added shovelling the coin back into his pocket with a careless, contemptuous air. “We have plenty of money, and we spend it freely. Landlord, another pot of ale, and another screw of bakker!”

This order was given with a pomposity which was as much as to say, “Look for instance, how I spend my money!”—then perceiving that he had produced a great effect, the wily sergeant suddenly decided upon following up the blow with another brilliant stroke of policy; and glancing quickly around, he cried, “Stop, landlord! There’s a dozen gentlemen here present, whose acquaintance I am very proud to form; and I am resolved they shall drink the King’s health at my expense. Instead of a pot of ale for my particular use, bring in two gallons of ale—and look sharp!”

There was a round of applause at this spirited behavior on the part of the sergeant; and old

Bushell hastened away joyously to execute an order of such unwonted magnitude at the Royal Oak. The instant he had quitted the room, Mr Langley, turning round to the barber, said “Pardon me, sir, for not having given you an opportunity to ask your other questions: but permit me first to put one to you. Have I the honor of addressing the village hairdresser and perfumer?”

“Them’s my calling,” replied Bates, hugely delighted at thus hearing himself denominated by the magnificent titles which were scrawled over his shop-front:—“and I flatter myself that for keen razors, hot water, good lathering soap, clean towels, business-like despatch, prime home-made bear’s-grease, and all other accommodations, my establishment stands unrivaled. I don’t care where the other is.”

“No doubt of it,” responded the sergeant:—“your appearance bespeaks your fitness for the important position in society which you hold. I shall have the pleasure of putting your talents to the test in respect to my chin every morning as long as I remain in your beautiful little village. I use bear’s-grease, too—and must try yours. By the bye, it’s singular though—isn’t it? that the moment I get a recruit, I always take him right off to the barber—beg pardon, hairdresser—and get him well shaved and his hair cut at once: and out of the King’s money, I always pay half-a-crown for each job—when the recruit happens to have been recommended to join by the hairdresser himself. But here’s the ale.”

We may suppose that Mr. Bates was so overwhelmed by this announcement of the magnificent way in which the sergeant treated his recruits, that he totally lost sight of the other questions he had proposed to put. Very certain it is that he did not put them at all, and that throughout the rest of the evening, instead of attempting to interrupt Mr. Langley, he was one of the most respectfully attentive of his listeners. Mr. Langley therefore had it all his own way; and what with the satisfactory aspect of affairs, the complete empire he had obtained over the credulous village tradesmen, and the effects of the ale, he gave such a rein to his imagination that the wonders he had previously related were, as Sancho Panza would say, “mere cakes and ginger-bread” in comparison with the marvels which he now proceeded to launch forth. It was actually midnight before the party thought of breaking up; and never within the memory of the oldest inhabitant of Oakleigh, had a light been seen so late in the parlor-windows of the public-house. Even then the company would not perhaps have made a move, had it not been that Mrs. Mummery, the baker’s wife—entertaining some vague misgiving that perhaps the formidable warrior who that evening arrived in the village, had been making a massacre of some of the inhabitants, her husband amongst them—suddenly made her appearance at the Royal Oak to ascertain the truth of the matter. The company then broke up,—the sergeant most patronizingly and affably shaking hands with all of them ere they departed, and hoping that they should meet again in the same convivial manner on the following evening.



## CHAPTER IV.

## FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

PETER DAVIS, the father of the beautiful Lucy, was a man of about fifty-five years of age—of middle stature, not stout, but very strongly built—and possessed of great physical strength. He had coarse features, and a pair of exceedingly large ears, which even if his countenance had been the handsomest in the world, would have been a frightful disfigurement to his head. His hair, once dark, was now of an iron gray: it was quite straight, very thick, and was brushed upright above his forehead. He had dark whiskers, very shaggy eye-brows, and small eyes of a deep greenish color. There were many hard lines across his forehead and about his mouth, which to the skilful physiognomist denoted strong passions as well as a severe nature, and a resolute firmness of purpose in respect to whatever he undertook. His voice was harsh and disagreeable: his manner was usually cold, reserved, and conveying the impression of a stern, implacable disposition.

It has already been said that he was a widower: but we may here observe that only four or five years had elapsed since his first wife died, and thus Lucy had enjoyed the benefit of a mother's care during that period of infancy and girlhood when such tender supervision was so essentially necessary. And tender that supervision had been in this instance: for Mrs. Davis was a most amiable, excellent, and kind-hearted woman, beloved by all who knew her. She had belonged to a family which, after seeing prosperous times, had become reduced in circumstances; and thus she had received a good education. The poverty to which her relatives were brought down, had compelled her to accept the offer of Peter Davis, who was already a well-to-do person; and though the heart's affection had nothing to do with this marriage, yet the young woman accepted her destiny with resignation, if not with cheerfulness, and made a most exemplary wife. Lucy received all her education from this excellent mother; and hence the superiority of our heroine's acquirements, manners, and tastes over the generality of the rustic maidens of the district.

Peter Davis had not made either a bad husband, nor as yet a bad father. He was utterly incapable of any feeling so noble as a warm affection: but at the same time he was not a man who showed the natural severity of his disposition or the harshness of his temper without a cause. He was not malignant unless provoked, and would not actually travel out of his way to exemplify his tyrannical character. Forbearance with such a man is a sort of negative virtue; and thus his home was not rendered unhappy through himself. His wife, having well understood his character, had yielded to him in all things; so that there had been little to trouble their domestic peace. Lucy was likewise of an amiable disposition, and sincerely loving her father, did her best to make his home happy. In all things had she proved docile, dutiful, and obedient—save and except in that

one instance, where the most submissive and tractable of children will at times rebel against the known wishes or expressed mandates of their parents.

This instance has ere now become apparent to the reader. For a long time past the lovers had snatched moments of an evening to meet in secret; and so prudent and cautions had been their proceedings, that though it was occasionally whispered in the village that an attachment did subsist between them, and that they were now and then seen together, yet the frequency of their interviews had remained unsuspected, especially by Peter Davis himself. Now, however, the whole truth was known to him: he had not merely encountered them in the silent shades of the wood, but had beheld them clasped in each other's arms; and therefore he was instantaneously enabled to account for the frequent rambles which Lucy had been accustomed to take alone.

When he conducted her away from the spot where the scene with Frederick Lonsdale had taken place, he maintained a stern silence for at least ten minutes. During this interval the extremity of the wood farthest from the village was reached; and the father and daughter proceeded to thread a path which lay through the fields to the neat little dwelling which midway between Oakleigh and the Manor House, occupied a sweetly picturesque position. It stood in the midst of a little garden, where the flowers exhibited the tasteful care bestowed upon them by Lucy herself; while the internal arrangements of the cottage denoted an equally sedulous female supervision.

"And so, Lucy," said her father, at length breaking silence, as emerging from the wood they proceeded through the fields, "you have held clandestine meetings with this Frederick Lonsdale, and have given him evidently the utmost encouragement that a young lady can possibly give under such circumstances? Doubtless the usual lovers' vows have passed between you?"

"Father," replied Lucy with a firmness of voice that was inspired by the candor of her nature and the artless purity of her thoughts, "not for a moment longer will I seek to disguise from you the truth, that I do love Frederick Lonsdale—love him with all my heart and with all my soul, and can never love another! It is true also that I have pledged my faith to him."

"Ah, I feared as much!" observed Davis; and he bit his lip to keep down a sudden outburst of rage: but immediately on perceiving that in order to carry out his own designs, he must proceed insidiously and craftily, not violently and passionately, he said, "Lucy, have I deserved this of you? Wherefore such deceitful conduct? wherefore such hypocrisy? Am I not your father? and have I not done a father's duty towards you?"

"Yes—and heaven knows that I have endeavored to prove an obedient daughter," murmured the poor girl, the tears now trickling down her cheeks. "But it is impossible to control the feelings of the heart. No human being, dear father, has this power!"

"But every wise and prudent young woman," rejoined the bailiff, "exercises a proper restraint over her feelings. Lucy, you cannot for a moment defend your conduct."

"I do not seek to justify it," she answered,—"merely to extenuate it. That I was wrong to meet Frederick clandestinely, I will not deny; but, Oh! father, I knew—alas! I knew too well, that situated as he is, it were useless to beseech your assent to our love. And yet, often and often, have I thought of throwing myself at your feet and imploring you, as you valued my happiness, to yield that assent."

"Lucy, this is little short of sheer madness—and it is sufficient to provoke my severest anger to perceive that you have entertained the idea of flinging yourself away upon this man."

"Father!" exclaimed the young damsel, "you are well acquainted with Frederick Lonsdale—you have known him from his childhood—and you must confess that his conduct is unimpeachable, that his nature is most generous, and that he is in every respect an exemplary young man."

"Lucy," responded Mr. Davis, now with severity in his tone, "all this is very fine for the pages of a novel and for imaginary heroes; but we are real people, and these are real circumstances. You know as well as I can tell you, that it would be sheer madness for you to throw yourself away upon a poor penniless laborer, who at this very moment is out of work."

"And why is he out of work?" exclaimed Lucy warmly. "Do you know the circumstances? Father, I conjure you, if you have a generous feeling in your soul, that you will exert your influence with Sir Archibald Redburn to obtain justice for Frederick."

"You are taxing my patience to a degree that is becoming intolerable," returned her father. "I intended to reason calmly with you upon this unfortunate affair; and you are making it much worse. Now, Lucy, once for all I tell you that you must renounce this foolish preference of your's for that man. I am your father, and it is my duty to see that you are well provided for in life. I have been proud of you—do not let me have to be ashamed of you."

"No, father—never!" exclaimed the girl firmly; and for a moment the glow of indignation flushed her cheeks.

"But you do not understand me. Not for a moment do I doubt the innocence of your soul—and the proof of it is that this Lonsdale has contrived to steal away your affections."

"Father, say nothing injurious to Frederick's character: he is incapable of selfish or treacherous conduct;"—and again did the crimson glow upon her cheeks.

"A pretty specimen of his integrity and honor," said Davis, now unable to subdue a sneer, "to entice you into clandestine meetings and render you a disobedient daughter. But still I do not wish to reproach you, Lucy. Remember, girl, your mother belonged to a genteel family, and trained you in a way that might properly lead you to aspire to a good alliance. It is no compliment to tell you that you are the handsomest young woman in the neighborhood;

and as your father I am proud of you. If you formed a low connexion like this, it would drive me mad: I would cast you off for ever. But I feel sure that your own good sense will prevail. Instead of looking downward, you should look upward. It is the greatest misfortune that can befall a young woman, to marry beneath her self. Lucy, my dear girl—I have formed hopes in your behalf, the realization of which is very possible: and at all events they must not be frustrated by you."

Lucy scarcely heard what her father said; she had fallen into a desponding reverie, and her heart was a prey to the deepest grief. Perhaps if her father had burst forth into a furious passion against her, her own reflections would have been less self-reproachful; but the general tenor of his discourse was so calm, and even conciliatory—so mildly remonstrative, all considered—that she could not help feeling he had a perfect right thus to address her—that according to the conceived notions of the world there was much truth in his observations—and that she had done wrong in holding clandestine interviews with Frederick. Not for an instant was her love diminished—not for a moment did she repent of the solemn troth she had plighted: but she could not help feeling that her father was only pursuing the prudent course of a parent anxious for his child's welfare; and it filled her with remorse to think that she could not yield implicit obedience to his wishes. Hence the gloom which had settled upon her soul: hence the mournful abstraction of her thoughts.

By this time they had reached their habitation; and Martha, the servant-girl whom they kept—the daughter of poor peasants in the village—opened the door. Lucy hurried up to her chamber, threw aside her bonnet and shawl, and sitting down, gave vent to her feelings in a flood of tears. This outburst of anguish to a certain extent relieved her; and in a few moments Martha tapped at the door to intimate that her father was waiting for her to descend to supper. Lucy hastily bathed her eyes to remove the traces of weeping; and composing her feelings as well as she was able, went down to the neat little parlor where the evening repast was spread. It was now dark—the curtain was closed—and lights were upon the board. The father and daughter sat down together: but the former ate not with his wonted appetite—and the latter partook of nothing.

"It is necessary," said Mr. Davis, when Martha had removed the tray, "that we should return to the subject of our recent discourse, even though it is an unpleasant one. But while it is still fresh in our minds, we had better talk it out to the end. I was saying, Lucy, that there were certain hopes which I entertained on your account—hopes definitely chalked out—"

"Indeed, father?" said the damsel, now gazing upon her parent with the curiosity of suspense.

"Yes, my child," he responded: "and the time has come when it is necessary to explain them to you. Listen calmly and attentively. I must repeat what I said just now—that to your deceased mother you are indebted for certain advantages not possessed by any other young



woman of the same rank in the whole neighborhood—I might ever say in the whole county; and nature has been most bountiful to you. You have a right, then, to raise your looks high; and in a word, you may aspire to a splendid position."

"I do not understand you, father," said Lucy, trembling and shuddering: for the thought struck her that her parent had perhaps already fixed upon a husband to whom he purposed to sacrifice her.

"I wish that I could see you as any other young woman would be, if placed in such favorable circumstances—anxious to make a good match—determined to avail yourself of opportunities—playing your cards well, in short—Now do you comprehend me?"

"No, father—most certainly I do not?"—and Lucy spoke the honest truth; for she was bewildered and amazed at this language, so novel from her father's lips, and so ominous in respect to her own cherished ideas of happiness.

"Then I must be explicit," observed Davis quickly: "for after what has occurred this evening it is useless to conceal my views any longer. Lucy," he added, bending forward and looking his daughter full in the face, "which would you rather do—become the wife of a wretched laborer and dwell in a beggarly lodging, or espouse a young gentleman of rank, with a certainty of possessing a fine fortune, and living in a mansion?"

The answer which the girl's heart prompted, was an affirmative reply to the first portion of his question: but she was too much overwhelmed with mingled consternation and amazement to be able to give utterance to any response at all. A suspicion of her father's meaning—but still dim and vague—had arisen in her mind: and yet while on the one hand she fancied it must be impossible, yet on the other did a secret voice whisper that it was really as she suspected.

"Now, Lucy," continued Davis, scarcely able to suppress an ejaculation of impatience at not being at once understood, "you are a girl of good sense and you *must* understand my meaning. Do you wish me to speak it out plain? Well, I will. In a word then, I am convinced that if you choose, you may become a lady—a real lady at once by marriage—and a lady too by title in due course."

Still did Lucy gaze upon her father in vacant bewilderment. Her suspicions seemed confirmed: she fancied that she comprehended him—and yet she dared not say to herself that it was so. If she did, her father would suddenly appear to her in a new light—as a bold intriguer—an unscrupulous manœuvrer; and her pure soul recoiled from the idea of regarding him as such. She felt as if she were in a dream, with her thoughts in confusion, yet a strange sinister light penetrating their cloudiness. The color had forsaken her cheeks—she sat still and motionless, in a sort of fright that was subdued by dismay.

"Lucy, won't you understand me?" exclaimed her father, with anger in his tone. "This is too much. If all your thoughts are bent upon that good-for-nothing fellow, I shall know how to

drive them out of you. He at least is disposed of: he will get no work from any tenant of the Baronet's—and so he must tramp away from the village. I don't think you will be disobedient enough to maintain any clandestine correspondence with him; and I should be sorry to have to say that I will keep a watch upon you. But this I do tell you—that you must follow the course I point out. By heaven, girl! the predestinated position is within your reach: I know it—I have calculated all the chances—I have planned all that must be done—I have set my heart upon it—it has become the whole and sole aim of my life—and if now that the time is at hand when the scheme is to be carried out, I am to be thwarted by any maudlin nonsense on your part, it will be a bitter day for you that you thus fly in your father's face."

An ejaculation almost amounting to a shriek, burst from Lucy's lips, as Mr. Davis thus concluded his speech. The veil had indeed dropped from her father's character: she suddenly beheld him in his true light—a thorough worldly-minded, unscrupulous man, bent upon carrying out his ambitious aims by any means and at any sacrifice of his child's happiness. Oh! it is a terrible moment when a daughter who has hitherto looked upon her father as a thoroughly honest and strictly conscientious individual, finds her belief so abruptly shattered, and the source of filial veneration dried up in a moment, like a spring that disappears in the bosom of the soil whence it has been accustomed to well forth.

"Now, Lucy, I have spoken out plainly," said Mr. Davis, no longer affecting any studied cajolery of language, but speaking with the stern bluntness of one who has developed a project and means to be obeyed by the instrument necessary for carrying it out: "I have spoken plainly, I say—and I am glad that I have made a clean breast of it. You at length know what I mean; and it is for you to obey. I am sure that when you come to think calmly upon the affair, you will fall into my views. You would be mad if you did not. But it is impossible that you have no ambition: every handsome and intelligent young woman has. You will get over this sentimental love fit of your's much sooner than you expect—particularly when you see that my scheme begins to work well and that the fish nibbles at the bait."

"Father, no more—no more!" almost shrieked forth Lucy, as she started from her seat. "Even if my heart were not pledged to another, I would not lend myself to such a scheme as this. No, I would not."

"But I say that you shall!" ejaculated her father fiercely; and seizing her by the wrist with a sudden wrench, almost brutal in its violence, he compelled her to sit down again. "There has been too much nonsense already, and I will put up with it no longer. Instead of covering you with reproaches for your secret meetings with that fellow Lonsdale, I spoke to you kindly: but if kindness will not do, I shall show you that I know how to use harshness. I tell you that it is in your power to ensnare the heart of that half idiot boy Gerald Redburn, in so inextricable a maze, that to possess you, he will consent to any thing. Of course I mean

marriage—and nothing else. Leave it to me to bring about opportunities and to throw you together: but it will then be for you to play your part—and by heaven! it *shall* be played, and well too—or I will show you that I am of a disposition not to be trifled with. So now you understand me.”

“Yes—too well, father,” replied Lucy, with a deep mournfulness of tone and a despairing look: then again rising from her seat, she took up a candle and hurried from the room.

That was the first time since her earliest years, that she had ever sought her chamber without bidding her sire good night and kissing his cheek: but on this occasion, she could not do it—no, she could not

## CHAPTER V.

### THE REDBURN FAMILY.

WE must now, upon the same evening, introduce our readers to the drawing-room of Redburn Manor, so that we may have an opportunity of affording some farther insight into the characters of the Baronet and his family. It has already been said that Sir Archibald himself was a man of about fifty years of age: we may add that he was a tall, fine-looking man, with a florid complexion, a portly form, and an upright gait. He loved to dress in what he called “the good old style of an English gentleman:” namely a blue coat with brass buttons, a buff waistcoat, black small-clothes, and hessian boots reaching to the middle of the calf of the leg, and with a little black tassel in the front of each.

Lady Redburn was about ten years his junior, and was an exceedingly handsome woman—now in the full *embonpoint* of forty, and though thus somewhat exuberant in figure, with her charms but little impaired by the hand of time. Her dark hair had not the slightest thread of silver to destroy the uniformity of its raven surface. Her eyes still retained much of their youthful fire; and her teeth were excellently preserved. It is true that art now supplied the place of the natural roses which had once bloomed upon her cheeks: but the rouge was so skilfully laid on by a clever lady’s-maid, that amongst country people it passed for a natural bloom, and every body at Oakleigh expressed admiration at the beauty of her ladyship’s complexion. Her mind was not however equal to her person: it was narrow, shallow, and frivolous to a degree—at the same time that her pride was inordinate, and she had the most sovereign contempt for “everything vulgar.” Lady Redburn, as well as her husband, considered that the working-classes were born for the mere purpose of fulfilling the part of serfs and bondsmen to the higher orders; and therefore any one who dared entertain a different opinion, was at once set down as a wicked, seditious, and evil-disposed person. We need hardly add that Sir Archibald was an inveterate Tory of the old school, devotedly attached to the British Constitution firmly believing that society would

crumble to pieces if the Established Church fell and that the industrious millions ought to go down upon their knees and bless heaven that they were ruled by an Hereditary Aristocracy.

Miss Redburn, the Baronet’s sister, was a lady of very nearly the same age as her sister-in-law, Lady Redburn: or to speak with the closest accuracy, she was thirty-nine. But very different was she in personal appearance. Of tall stature, her figure was thin, even to emaciation: she appeared to be all skin and bone; and not even the artifices of the toilet could bestow upon her shape the semblance of contours to conceal its leanness. Her face was equally thin, and of a death-like paleness. Her eyes were of a glassy azure—not the serene pure hue of heaven, but the light bluish shade which has a dead dull look when seen in the human eye. Her lips were thin, and usually held compressed—not for the purpose of hiding the teeth, because these constituted her only good feature—but through a habit which she had contracted. Her look was altogether disagreeable—almost repulsive: yet it was not an old maidish primness that characterized her, but an universal acerbity of temper and bitterness of disposition legible in every feature, and shining through her as it were with its sinister light. She was habitually reserved and taciturn; but when she spoke, it was generally to say sour and unpleasant things. She dressed with some degree of care, and evidently studied to diminish the impression of her shrivelled form as much as possible. Yet she detested society—and very seldom crossed the threshold of the mansion, except on Sunday when she regularly visited Oakleigh Church at the two services, no matter what might be the state of the weather. She had no favorite cats, nor French poodle, nor even a parrot—nothing that elderly spinsters usually adopt as the objects of their affection for want of that which they have failed to obtain—namely, a husband. She seemed to have no liking for any living thing, and to feast as it were inwardly upon the poison of her own morbid and ill-conditioned mind.

And yet those who had known her many years back, represented her to have been a very different being from what those who saw her now might imagine. It was even said that she was once beautiful, and also that she was a gay, laughing, joyous creature with sunny smiles upon her lips, when a girl in her *teens*. The change which had led her on to be what we have described her alike in looks and temper, had been gradual, as if some insidious poison had been infused into her and had imperceptibly but surely done its all but fatal work, corroding the wholesome essence of physical life, and envenoming all her feelings at the heart’s fountain. What was the cause thereof? No one knew. As a matter of course the reader will instantaneously suspect that it was disappointed love: but those who had known her from her infancy, would confidently declare that such was not the case. It appeared, therefore, to be one of those instances of physical blight which are not to be accounted for, and which involve the warping of some feelings and the deadening of others in the premature decay of the whole being.

General Redburn was as we have already



stated close upon one-and-twenty years of age. He was a slight, pale, sickly-looking youth—with an enfeebled frame, a weak voice, and an appearance as if he were falling into a decline. Possessed of the strongest passions, and ever intent upon gratifying them, he had in his immoderate pursuit of pleasure sapped the foundations of his existence. Up to the age of sixteen he had been a promising youth: but a couple of years' residence in the metropolis had plunged him into a course of dissipation which he continued to pursue when he repaired thence to one of the Universities; and a career of two more years at Oxford had well-nigh sent him into his grave. His parents, when almost too late, awoke from the dream into which they had been lulled concerning him. They had flattered themselves that he was merely sowing his wild oats, and would be all the better after an adequate experience of what is called "life," and a satiation of its pleasures; but it was not till his physician at Oxford earnestly represented to Sir Archibald and Lady Redburn that their son was killing himself with dissipation, that they compelled him to renounce his College life and settle quietly down with them at the Manor. Here they hoped that the fine bracing air of the country, the absence of the temptations which abound in cities and towns, and a compulsory regularity of existence would restore his almost wasted energies. To a certain extent this had been the case; and there was some improvement in the young man's appearance. But still he was of the sickly and enervated look which we have described; and it was difficult indeed for a stranger to suppose him to be the son of that fine, portly, florid looking man, and that handsome healthy lady in the glorious *emboupoint* of life's prime.

The reader is now sufficiently well introduced to the Redburn family to enable us to pursue the thread of our narrative. It was between nine and ten o'clock in the evening when we thus look in upon them in the handsome old-fashioned drawing-room where they were seated. The Baronet was reading the *Morning Post*, to which he was a regular subscriber: her ladyship was expatiating in her usually frivolous manner upon the prosperous condition of the tenants and laborers upon the estate—which however was very far from being the case: Gerald was yawning over a new novel which he had received from London a few days previously;—and Miss Redburn, or "Aunt Jane" as she was usually called, was sitting very upright in a high-backed chair, listening with a sort of sneering smile upon her lip to the rhodomontade her sister-in-law was delivering.

"I see your College-chum Frank Dashwood, has just been gazetted to a cornetcy," said the Baronet, lowering the paper upon his knees and looking round towards his son.

"What, then—he's out the Church, eh?" observed Gerald. "Well, I never thought he would go into it: it wasn't the kind of thing for him. Besides, a strapping fellow, six feet six without his boots, wouldn't look well up in a pulpit. His head would touch the sounding-board; and what a jolly laugh there would be amongst the congregation!"

"Yes—if you were there to set an example," said Aunt Jane.

"Well, after all, if I was a young man over again, I think I should prefer the Army to any profession," said the Baronet.

"Now don't go and put these silly notions into Gerald's head, Sir Archy," exclaimed her ladyship. "I am sure I don't want him to go buttoning himself up in a red coat or a blue jacket so as to prevent the natural expansion of his form—or to have one of those nasty heavy caps that wear all the hair off the head. You know there was my brother the Colonel—as handsome a young man when he was two-and-twenty as ever you could wish to see——"

"As fine a fellow as our Gerald perhaps," observed Aunt Jane.

The Baronet started, and threw upon his sister a stern look at this withering sarcasm which was levelled against his son: but Miss Redburn seemed perfectly indifferent to the pain she had inflicted, and her thin lips were compressed more tightly than ever.

"I suppose you meant *that* in your usual ill-natured way, aunt?" said Gerald: "but you mustn't think yourself a beauty. In fact, when the corn in our fields is getting ripe, I mean to ask you to stick yourself up as a scarecrow to keep the birds off."

"No, you would do better," retorted Aunt Jane: "because it requires a namikin."

"Oh, you be hanged!" cried Gerald. "And now that you have spoke of it, sir," he added, turning to his father, "I really think I should like to go into the Army——"

"Gracious goodness, boy!" exclaimed Lady Redburn frightened out of her wits at this announcement. "You mustn't think of such a thing. What, an only son—the heir of the title and estates—to stand a chance of getting shot in battle, if a war took place——"

"Not he!" said Aunt Jane. "He would always be in the rear."

"Oh! pray don't interrupt," exclaimed her ladyship petulantly. "Now, you see, sir Archy, what you have gone and put into Gerald's head——"

"No, the governor didn't, now!" cried the youth: "for I put it there myself."

"It was lucky," interjected Aunt Jane. "Your head wanted something in it."

"It's a thing I have been thinking of for a long time past," continued Gerald. "But I don't want to go into a cavalry-regiment; because I don't like the uniform. I prefer the red coat: and so I fix upon the infantry. Why, you, sir, with your interest at the Horse Guards could get me a commission almost so soon as you lodged the money at Cox and Greenwood's; and you might even pick and choose the regiment. At all events you could get me into a regiment that's recently come home from foreign service, and therefore certain to remain in England for a few years."

"Ah! if all this can be done," observed Lady Redburn, "it somewhat alters the case:—then like a frivolous, vacillating, fond foolish mamma as she was, she added, "Well, after all, I think I should like to see Gerald in a red coat. But mind, it must have gold lace, and not silver

I can't bear silver lace—particularly for a pale complexion. How you would astonish all our friends in the country, coming down in your uniform, Gerald! and what a favorite you would be with the ladies! They are so fond of an officer! And mind too, it must be a regiment in which they wear those high feathers——”

“As tall as himself,” observed Aunt Jane.

“Well, I do really think,” said the Baronet, “that we have started an idea which is not a bad one. It would be as well if Gerald had something to occupy him for the next three or four years: and I don't know that he could do anything better than take up a commission for that time.”

“There are so many things he is fit for, it is of course difficult to choose,” said Aunt Jane.

“Well, I am glad, sir, that you think seriously of it,” cried the youth: “for it suits me uncommonly well. When will you see about it? when will you lodge the money?”

“I and your mother will talk it over a little first,” replied Sir Archibald: “and if we still think the same, I will write up to London about it in a day or two. By the bye, Gerald, I did as you asked me, and gave Davis orders to turn off that impudent fellow—what's his name?”

“Frederick Lonsdale,” answered Gerald. “There never was such an impertinent scoundrel in this world—the most outrageously saucy clodhopper I ever knew.”

“Has he been boxing your ears?” inquired Aunt Jane, with more bitterness than before.

“The idea! Why, if he had only waited a little longer I should have given him such a thrashing with my riding whip as he never had in his life: but when he saw I was going to leap off to pick it up for the purpose, he scampered away as if a mad dog was after him. All those country louts are despicable cowards——”

“And so are some gentlemen,” added Aunt Jane.

“But I hope, sir,” resumed Gerald, addressing his father—for he seldom took notice of Miss Redburn's bitter and sarcastic interjections,—“that you told Davis to take measures to get that scoundrel altogether off the estate?”

“To be sure I did. We will have no such impudent fellows on our property. The village, too, will be well quit of him: for I have more than once heard that he dares hold opinions which if spread abroad would demoralize the working classes. The idea of the working classes having rights! It is really too absurd.”

“To be sure,” said Aunt Jane: “they should have nothing but wrongs.”

“For a long time past,” continued the Baronet, “I had intended to get rid of the fellow; but I couldn't very well manage it without an opportunity. And now it has pre-sented itself. There will be no alternative but for him to leave the village.”

At this moment the door opened, and a liveried footman announced the Rev. Mr. Arden. This gentleman was midway between fifty and sixty—short, thin, with a look half demure and half severe, and though his countenance was pale and his features angular, yet it was not

difficult to perceive that in his younger days he must have been good-looking. He was married, and had a host of grown up children—chiefly sons, who had become settled in various ways in life through the interest of his patron Sir Archibald Redburn. He entered with the ease of an old friend and took a seat uninvited, because he knew that he was welcome: while on the other hand the Baronet and his wife did not treat him with the slightest ceremony.

“I called up to tell you a piece of news,” said the rector of Oakleigh. “What do you think?”

“What?” exclaimed Lady Redburn. “The mob risen in London and set fire to the West End?”

“Not quite so bad as that,” answered the clergyman with a smile; “although they are quite capable of such an atrocity if it were not for the presence of our glorious troops and the wise provisions of our paternal government.”

“Then what is it?” inquired Lady Redburn, who was always haunted by visions of insurrectionary movements.

“Why, nothing more nor less than the arrival of a recruiting-sergeant in our peaceful little village. He came by the van this evening, and has taken up his quarters at Bushell's.”

“And a very good thing too, that such a person has come,” observed the Baronet: “for he will bear away with him the scum of our laboring population. There are half-a-dozen idle fellows about the place that it would be a blessing to get rid of, for it's impossible they can all find work—and so something must be done with them. Heaven knows the poor-rates are already high enough! All my tenants are complaining of the rise in the rates; and so it will be better for these unemployed fellows to march off with the recruiting-sergeant than quarter themselves upon the parish.”

“Oh, decidedly!” observed the Rev. Mr. Arden. “It is one of the wise dispensations of Providence that there should be rich and poor; and therefore it is very fortunate we have a standing army to draught off some of our surplus able-bodied paupers. For my part, I wonder that government does not bring in a bill for the forcible impressment of all able-bodied paupers now in the workhouses or receiving out-door relief.”

“Ah, the idea is excellent!” exclaimed the Baronet. “How it would relieve the county-rates! I wish you would write a letter to the papers, Arden, and give the idea. Of course it would be anonymous.”

“It shall be done, since you desire it. I propose on the Sabbath to preach a sermon in allusion to the visit of the recruiting-sergeant amongst us. I think it will be a good topic. The circumstance has created an immense sensation in the village. I have no doubt that the Royal Oak will be crowded this evening.”

“I like to hear of Bushell doing well,” said the Baronet. “He has been a tenant of mine for the last twenty years, and deserves support. There was a fellow came over to the village the other day from one of the neighboring towns—I forget which—and without

saying what he wanted to build, he got from Davis an agreement for that piece of ground where Widow Grant's cottage was burnt down, you know."

"Yes, yes—I know. Go on, Sir Archibald," interjected Mr. Arden. "Pray proceed."

"Well, as soon as the fellow had got my bailiff's agreement, and thought he had managed the business all very clever indeed, he threw off the mask and boldly said he meant to build a new public-house on the spot, as he had been told there was a good opening for such a concern, as Bushell kept up high prices. Well, Davis came up in a fright and told me of it. I bade him not be alarmed, but to send up the fellow to me at the Manor. This was done—and the man made his appearance, quite with an independent air—"Now," said I, "my good fellow, you are going to build a public house, are you?"—"Yes, sir," said he. "I have got a few hundred pounds, and a wife and large family to support, and I have been in the public line all my life; so as I think there's a fair chance of doing at Oakleigh, I don't see that I can do better with my money than lay it out in this speculation."—"Well," said I, "you had better think twice of it; for remember, the Royal Oak is my property, and Mr. Bushell is my tenant; and if you come into the village, Bushell's business will fall off, and perhaps he won't be able to pay me the rent. Now I must protect Bushell, and I must protect myself. So I tell you what it is; you may build your public-house if you like; but as long as I have the honor to be Chairman at Quarter Sessions, I can tell you that you won't get a license."—"So the fellow went away, muttering something; but I didn't care about that—and there was an end to the business."

"Did he go and commit suicide?" inquired Aunt Jane.

"Don't you think I acted quite right, Arden?" said the Baronet.

"Quite right," was the clergyman's response. "You could not well have done otherwise. But my dear Sir Archibald, it is your way to manage things thus cleverly and judiciously. By the bye, just as I was leaving home, I met that young man Fred Lonsdale; and stopping him I said that I hoped he had renounced those sinful opinions which he had been known to entertain. He answered me with some degree of bitterness that he cherished them more firmly than ever; and he had the impertinence to say that he had this very day received more than one proof how the rich oppress the poor. I rebuked him for his wicked remark—when he broke away from me in the rudest manner possible, and actually did not take off his hat."

"What will the world come to next?" exclaimed Lady Redburn, holding up her hands in dismay.

"They will all persist in keeping their hats on," interjected Aunt Jane.

Gerald hastened to explain to Mr. Arden what had taken place between himself and Lonsdale in the earlier part of the day; or rather, he gave his own version of the transaction. The clergyman was of course highly indignant at such outrageous conduct on the part of "a miserable

laborer;" and after some more conversation upon the subject, it was unanimously agreed (Aunt Jane excepted) that the best thing that Frederick Lonsdale could do was to take advantage of the presence of the recruiting-sergeant in the village, accept the King's "bounty-money," and go for a soldier.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE RECRUITS.

At an early hour on the following morning, Mr. Bates the barber was summoned to the Royal Oak to operate upon the beard of Sergeant Langley. The tonsorial achievement being performed, Mr. Langley threw down a shilling; and when the barber fumbled about in his pocket for the change but turned over nothing except a bad penny, a bunch of keys, and a clasp-knife, the sergeant munificently bade him keep the money, as he could not possibly think of paying less to so skilful a professional as Mr. Bates. The barber bowed as low to the sergeant as if he were the commander-in-chief, and took his departure, vowing that Mr. Langley was an excellent fellow as well as a perfect gentleman, and that he would do all he could to forward his views.

The reader has not failed to comprehend sergeant Langley's policy in respect to Mr. Bates. He knew full well that the barber's shop was the place where all local matters were duly talked over, and that the opinions of the rustics received their tone and coloring from the impress given to them in that establishment. He was likewise aware that the barber himself was an oracle amongst his customers, and that he had the means of influencing the discourse which passed around him. It was therefore highly important to make a friend of Mr. Bates: and this Sergeant Langley succeeded in doing to the fullest extent. The splendid treat of ale on the previous night, together with the hint thrown out relative to the half-crown a-head for all recruits taken to be shaved and clipped at Mr. Bates's shop,—and now the liberal fee of a shilling being a sort of intimation that this would continue to be the payment for each morning's shave,—completely won the barber's heart; and he rushed back to his shop prepared to chaunt the praises of Sergeant Langley, the Army, the beauties of a soldier's life, the exciting pleasure of enlistment, and all matters having the slightest reference to the military service. We need hardly add that a recruiting sergeant is well supplied with money to flash about and make a display with, and that it is invariably an astute, clever, and unscrupulous man who is selected for the duty.

When Bates got back to his shop, he found Frederick Lonsdale seated in a corner reading a book and waiting to be shaved. Bates accordingly began to operate upon him. In a few minutes the rustics and villagers whose morning it was to treat themselves to a shave, came one by one into the little shop; and now the barber began to touch upon the topic that was uppermost in his mind. He approached it gently at



first, and in a careless manner, as if it were a subject of mere conversational indifference, and not one in which he had the slightest personal interest. He began by observing that by the bye, they had got a recruiting-sergeant in the village—that he had passed the previous evening in his company—and that he seemed a very nice, agreeable, good-humored kind of man. Then he spoke of the Army generally; and having, after a few observations succeeded in rivetting the attention of his hearers, the wily barber glided glibly into the most eulogistic details in respect to the happiness, glory, comfort, and lucrativeness of a soldier's life.

Lonsdale, when shaven, resumed his seat in the corner of the shop, and took up the book he had been reading; but it speedily dropped upon his knees, and his eyes ceased to dwell on its contents. It was not that his interest became absorbed in the extravagant dissertation of Mr. Bates; for not a single word to which the barber was giving utterance, reached his ear: all his senses and faculties were wrapped up in mournful contemplation of his own condition. He had no work, and very little money—indeed only a few shillings, the remnant of his previous Saturday's wages: for the reader will remember that he had not touched the silver Davis had tossed to him upon the bank of the stream. He had no work, we say—and his spirit would not permit him to go up to the Manor and cringe in grovelling apologies either to Gerald Redburn or Sir Archibald. He knew that it would be worse than useless—a mere waste of time indeed—to apply for employment to any of the tenant farmers on Sir Archibald's estate; while in the village there was nothing he could turn his hand to, that would give him a livelihood. Such was his position. What was he to do? The only chance for him appeared to be to seek for work on some of the farms of other landlords beyond the limits of the Redburn estate. But then, as we have hinted in a former chapter, the labor-market was already overstocked—the times were bad—and there were more hands wanting work than there was work for them to do. Nevertheless, Lonsdale resolved to set out and try his fortune; for neither his circumstances nor his inclinations would allow him to remain idle.

He had only continued sitting in the shop until a little coffee-pot which he had set upon the barber's fire, had boiled: and then he was about to ascend to his own chamber to take his frugal breakfast, when one of his comrades asked him if it were true that he had been turned off? He replied that it was, and tarried a few moments to give a brief explanation.

'Isn't it unfortunate, my friends?' exclaimed Bates. "I was quite concerned when I heard of it. But I say, Lonsdale!" he ejaculated, as if struck by a sudden idea, "What a chance there is now for you, my lad!"

"What do you mean?" inquired Frederick.

"What do I mean?" exclaimed the barber, stepping back from behind a burly rustic off whose chin he was scraping a three days' bristly beard: "what do I mean? Why, the opportunity of making yourself a gentleman—of becoming independent of Redburn, and bailiffs, and

farmers, and what not—of rising to honor, and fame, and rank, and fortune—of dying perhaps a Colonel, or a General, at a good old age,—That's what I mean!"—and the excited barber flourished his razor in one hand and his father-brush in the other.

Lonsdale made no reply; but still lingering for a few moments, seemed to reflect profoundly: then suddenly starting from his reverie, he hurried up the little ladder-like staircase to his own chamber.

When he was gone, Mr. Bates continued to hold forth with all the powers of his oratory upon the glory and happiness of a soldier's life; and the gaping rustics drank in with their ears all his rose-colored representations with as pleasurable an avidity as ever their throats swallowed down strong ale at haymaking or at harvest-home. It was evident that Mr. Bates's eloquence had made a deep impression upon some of them; and two or three got whispering together in a corner,—comparing notes of their opinion upon the subject. Wages were low—work was precarious—and even though the haymaking season was approaching, yet they foresaw such an immigration of tramping Irish laborers, that they beheld very cheerless prospects before them. They however came to no positive conclusion then, but resolved to have a look at the sergeant and hear what he had to say.

At the very moment that some four or five of the rustics, on issuing from Mr. Bates's shop in order to proceed to their labor, were passing by the Royal Oak, Sergeant Langley himself made his appearance in the full-blown-glory of his military rank. It was now seven o'clock: the newly risen sun was shining brightly—and Mr. Langley's scarlet coat, scrupulously brushed, was jazzing to the eye. His belt was pipe-clayed into snowy whiteness—the brass of his accoutrements was perfectly resplendent—his buckskin gloves had not a spot upon them—his gray trousers, with the thin red stripes down the legs, were almost new—and his boots were a walking testimony to the excellence of the blacking used at the Royal Oak. His sword hung by his side: his sash encircled his waist.—The only thing that was deficient in his costume, was the tall red and white feather that ought to have decorated his cap: but instead thereof, he wore the various-colored ribbons which served as a sign held out to indicate that he sought recruits for his Majesty's service. He walked with a cane, the brass knob of which was so brilliantly polished that it looked like gold; and as he thus issued forth from the Royal Oak, he held himself so erect, trod with such an air of self importance, and tapped his stick so firmly upon the ground, that the rustics shrank back in reverend awe of so high and mighty a personage.

Sergeant Langley looked, in fact as if he had just come out of a band-box,—so scrupulously neat, so clean, so well-shaven, and so carefully accoutred, that his very appearance bespoke prosperity and comfort. And then too he had put on his "recruiting smile,"—a certain bland, half-patronizing, half-complacent air, which said as eloquently as possible, even to the compe-

hension of the not very keen-witted rustics, "Look at me! see what I am! is there not contentment expressed in every lineament of my countenance? do I seem as if I was burdened with a single care? am I not sleek and fat, with a well fed appearance and comfortable look?—Poor devils! I pity you in your hard toils: but you may be as well off as I am if you choose!"

Now, we must admit that all this was a great deal to be expressed merely by the looks without the assistance of words; and yet every syllable of that silent eloquence was intelligibly spoken from the features of Sergeant Langley, as he put on his recruiting smile and came forth from the public-house.

"Good morning, my fine fellows," he said, advancing up to the rustics, amongst whom his keen eye on the instant selected a couple, one after the other, who would answer his purpose admirably. "Going to work—eh? Well, it's a beautiful morning for the toils of the field: but they *are* toils, nevertheless—toils which, thank God, I am never likely to know; for being, you perceive, in his Majesty's service, I am well fed—well lodged—well clothed—well treated—and well paid too. Heaven be thanked, I am what I am!"

The rustics gazed in silent wonderment, mingled with admiration, upon the fine portly form of the sergeant; and ideas of the continuous enjoyment of roast beef, plum pudding, and copious draughts of strong beer, arose in their minds as they thought to themselves that such sleek and comfortable looks could not possibly be maintained upon a less generous fare.

"Yes, my friends," continued the sergeant, "the soldier's life is the only happy one. Talk of freedom—it is true freedom! Talk of luxury—it is real luxury! Talk of excitement—it is continual excitement! Talk of enjoyment—why, it's nothing but a very little drill and plenty of good food, bakker, and strong beer?"

Here the rustics' mouths watered; and feeling athirst, they unwittingly but naturally plunged their looks into the tempting entrance of the Royal Oak.

"My friends," exclaimed Sergeant Langley, on whom not a gesture, not a glance, nor even so much as the movement of a muscle of the face on the part of those rustics, was lost: "the soldier too is generous and hospitable, because he has the means of being so. The soldier never wants for money, because he serves his Sovereign, and his Sovereign is so grateful that he showers gold upon the soldiers' heads. Come, my friends, and you shall have an opportunity of drinking to the health of this most gracious King of our's. Come, follow me—don't be afraid—I am not proud, although wearing the Sovereign's uniform, I have reason to be. But I dearly love country-people, and am not ashamed to be seen in the company of honest fellows such as you."

The rustics could not of course refuse an invitation so heartily given; they therefore followed the sergeant into the Royal Oak; and not the least curious feature of the scene was the contrast which the slouching, rolling, ungainly gait of the poor laborers presented, in their coarse smocks and their great heavy ac-

cup boots, with the stately and majestic movements of Mr. Langley.

Conducting them into the parlor—a *sanctum* which the rustics had never dared enter before, their appropriate place of resort being the tap-room—the sergeant rang the bell in a commanding manner; and when the landlord made his appearance, he said with a superb air, "Mr. Bushell, a gallon of your best ale. And mind that it is the very best! The old ale, you know: for I wish to entertain my friends here."

The landlord of course knew very well what was going on: but it was not his business to say a word, even if he felt inclined—which indeed he was not, for he himself had been amazed and confounded by all the marvellous stories which the sergeant had told on the previous evening in order to illustrate the delights of a soldier's life. He accordingly lost no time in bringing in the ale, with glasses according to the number of guests to partake of the liquor. The sergeant helped them liberally, but excused himself from doing more than just sipping at his own glass.

"The fact is," he said, "I seldom drink before dinner, unless it is a glass of Madeira with my lunch: but after dinner I always take my bottle of wine—regimental allowance, my friends—every man in my regiment has his bottle of wine a-day, two quarts of ale, and a pint of gin; and so I wait till the evening to enjoy myself. Then, as I lounge upon the sofa in my barrack room, over my dessert, I drink my wine, smoke my cigar, and make myself comfortable. But come, let me refill your glasses."

This was done again and again; and the sergeant's tongue never ceased going. He painted the barracks in all the vivid colors of a palatial abode—talked of the furniture as if it were of regal magnificence—and as he filled the glasses for the fourth time, ventured so far as to hint at the beautiful gardens, with flowers and fountains, arbors and bowers, in which the soldiers of his regiment whiled away the best portion of their time. At the sixth glass he did a little more in the style of Mahomet's paradise, and peopled his imaginary gardens with charming girls, in whose arms the soldiers reposed after the fatigues of an hour's parade.

Of the rustics whom he had thus assembled, those who would not suit him happened to be precisely the very ones who, though now half-tipsy, rose and declared that they must be off to their work. The two whom the sergeant did want, were those whom he succeeded in persuading to remain. When he was alone with these two, he cunningly asked them a variety of questions, so as to assure himself that their position and circumstances would not afford any claim to exemption if he should succeed in entrapping them; but these queries he put with so much tact, and elicited with so much skill the information he required, that they could not for a single instant suspect his ulterior purpose. Besides, they were already more than half-intoxicated; and they did not refuse to drink as he continued to fill their glasses.

"My good fellows," exclaimed Langley at the

conclusion of a brilliant picture which he had been drawing of life in the barracks, "I do not know how it is with you, but I am getting hungry. I have not breakfasted yet. At home in my quarters I generally manage a cold chicken or a pound of ham, besides muffins or hot rolls; but I am afraid we shall not find these things here. However, I know there is some cold beef in the landlord's larder: and we will have it in with pickles and mustard—condiments we call them in the barracks. Stay a minute: I will see about it myself."

Sergeant Langley accordingly issued from the parlor, and sought the landlord in the bar.

"Now, Mr. Bushell," he said, "you will please to send in whatever cold meat you have got in the larder. Give me a pint of brandy and a couple of quart pots."

This was done; and the sergeant proceeded to divide the brandy between the two pewter pots, the landlord looking on with much interest and curiosity.

"Now," said Mr. Langley, "fill up these two pots with the strongest old ale you have got in tap—mind, the strongest! Why the deuce do you hesitate?"

"Well, Mr. Langley," said Bushell, touched with certain compunctious feelings, "I shouldn't like it to be said that I had any hand in entrapping those two poor devils—"

"Mr. Bushell," interrupted the sergeant, drawing himself up with awful gravity, and speaking in a stern tone of rebuke: "you would almost make me think that you are a traitor to your king. And mind, Mr. Bushell, I don't want to threaten—but there is such a thing as a law of treason; and *we* officers engaged in the recruiting districts, do happen to be vested with very great powers."

"I am sure, sir," said Bushell, looking terribly blank and dismayed, "I wasn't aware that—I mean that—that—that—I beg pardon—"

"Well, my friend, I accept your apology," returned the sergeant, with a half-majestic, half-patronizing wave of the hand, which a tragic actor might have copied with considerable benefit to himself. "And now fill up the pots."

This was done; and the sergeant, by way of precaution, so as to prevent the substitution of a less potent liquor when his back was turned, conveyed with his own hands the two pots of brandied ale into the parlor. Thither he was speedily followed by the landlord, bearing a tray of cold meat, a jolly quartern loaf, butter, pickles, and so forth.

"Now, my friends—my very dear friends, as I am proud and pleased to call you," said the sergeant, "we will regale ourselves. Of course you like the undercut of the sirloin? The soldiers in our regiment are such dainty dogs they will never eat any other part. But then, you see, the colonel spoils them: he lets them have too many luxuries—he does, 'pon my honor! Roast beef and plum-pudding are the standing dishes; and then, what with soup, and fish, and poultry, and game, their appetites are quite pampered. Ah! its a blessing indeed to get into our regiment—it's the crack one of the ser-

vice. A nicer set of officers you couldn't hope to meet—quiet, gentlemanly, say-nothing-to-nobody kind of fellows—But don't wait for me—peg away, my friends—and there's a pot of ale in front of each of you. It's quite mild, this ale is: I told Bushell to draw it so. Now, my friends, drink away—and here's the King's health, God bless him!"

The two rustics made tremendous inroads upon the viands; and as a large amount of eating acquires a proportionate quantity of drinking, they applied the quart pots so often to their lips and took such deep draughts, that the brandied ale produced all the effects which Mr. Langley both anticipated and desired. The men became excitedly and not stupidly tipsy; and having thus modelled them into the precise humor which suited his purposes, the recruiting-sergeant proceeded to strike the final blow.

"Worthy friends," he said, putting on the blandest of all bland smiles and the most cajoling of all coaxing airs, "I should think you don't feel much in a humor now to go to work in the fields. Well then, what say you? Come, are you for the happy life of a soldier? Plenty of money—plenty of good fare—plenty of fine clothes—and best of all, your King's approval. What a life of happiness and glory! Now then, my friends, don't be without money. Such fine fellows as you are, ought always to have silver in your pockets. Aye, and gold too, for that matter! The *bounty* I have to offer, my friends, is three pounds to every one who enlists with me!—three pounds, my friends, in good so id, sterling cash!—three pounds! I repeat, in the current coin of the blessed realm! Now, my friends, I should think that each of you would like to have three pounds—eh? Three pounds—what a sum! It's a regular little fortune! Come—shall I be your banker?"—and as the sergeant thus spoke, he drew forth a handful of money which he tossed upon the table with the air of one accustomed to lavish it profusely.

The two rustics looked at the money, and then at each other; and then their inebriated gaze was reverted to the shining coins again.

"Brave fellows that you are!" said the sergeant; "you accept my proposal? I see you do. The service is honored by having you—and you are honored by entering the service. Three pounds bounty-money, my friends! But you had better not take it *at* once: you'd only be losing it—or spending it too quick. Come—what say you to leaving a portion in my hands? Ah, to be sure! I knew you would—your looks are eloquence itself. There! take ten shillings a-piece—ten good sterling shillings for each—and I'll hold the balance of two pound ten for each till you want it! Take up your cash, my lads; and mark, in the King's name I give it to you!"

The two poor fellows, scarcely knowing what they did—but dazzled, bewildered, and confused—took up the ten shillings presented to each and put it into their pockets.

"Now," ejaculated Mr. Langley, "give me your hands. You are in the King's service; and if a splendid career isn't open before you both, then I'm very much mistaken."

Having procured writing-materials, the ser-



geant took down the names of his two recruits, together with such other particulars as he required: and then he told them that they might stay at the Royal Oak and enjoy themselves as they had been doing. He directed them to retire into the tap-room, where he ordered them to be supplied with pipes and tobacco; and bidding them entertain no fear as to what their friends or relations might say, he very kindly undertook to go and acquaint them with the fact of their enlistment.

A few minutes afterwards the sergeant was seen wending his way through the village, guided by the hostler of the Royal Oak; and all the little girls and boys shrank back in mingled awe and admiration from the presence of the stately soldier in his brilliant accoutrements, as he passed along. The hostler conducted him to the cottage where dwelt the father, mother, and brothers of one of the new recruits. The brothers had gone out to their work: but to the old people Mr. Langley gradually, carefully, and dexterously broke the intelligence. At first the father and mother were cruelly frightened and distressed at the idea of their son going away for a soldier: but the sergeant's eloquence overruled their scruples; and so brilliant was the picture that he drew of military life in general, as well as the glorious prospects that awaited their son in particular, that the old people became appeased, and even satisfied at the lad's enlistment. The sergeant intimated to them that he had invited their son to stay with him a couple of days at the Royal Oak, during which period they (the parents) had better not come to see them, as they would be very much occupied; and having thus comfortably settled the business in this quarter, he repaired to the cottage where dwelt the relatives of his other recruit.

These consisted of a widowed mother, a daughter, and two sons. The lads were at home at the time, waiting for the brother who had just enlisted, to join them and go to work, and wondering why he remained so long away. The presence of the recruiting-sergeant at once explained the cause of his absence; and the bitterest lamentations speedily arose. The widowed mother and the daughter threw themselves on their knees at the feet of the sergeant, beseeching him to restore the lad; while the brothers overwhelmed him with reproaches, and even threatened him with violence. Mr. Langley was too much accustomed to such scenes to be at all moved by the present one; the tears of the females and the menaces of the men, were regarded by him with equal indifference. He accordingly had recourse to menaces in his turn, telling the young men that they had better leave off that kind of nonsense as soon as possible or he should know how to treat them; and he went on to declare that if they took any measures to dissuade their brother from the course he had adopted, all the terrors of the law would be invoked against them. Then he blustered and vapored about constables and prisons with so much apparent consciousness of power, that the young men were overawed; and the mother and sister, fearing that these youths might also be snatched away from them,

besought the terrible sergeant not to visit them with his wrath. Mr. Langley consented to pardon them on condition that no attempt was made by any member of the family to see the young man for two whole days; and with this intimation, he stalked away from the cottage. Bleeding hearts did he leave behind him there; and he was followed by the widow's curse that he had taken away her favorite son. But the anathema was silently expressed within her own bosom as he turned away, though even if it had been proclaimed aloud in his presence he would have recked not for it.

The reader may perhaps wish for information as to Mr. Langley's motive in keeping his recruits altogether apart from their relations during two whole days. According to the law, it is requisite that within forty-eight hours after the enlistment, a written notice is to be given to the recruit, informing him that he has so enlisted; when, if he receives the notice and admits in the presence of a witness that the proceeding is fair and correct, he debars himself from the privilege of self emancipation (save on payment of smart-money) when taken before the magistrate and questioned as to whether his enlistment was voluntary. Sergeant Langley was therefore desirous to prevent the representations, the tears and entreaties of friends and relatives from being brought to play upon his recruits during those forty-eight hours; and therefore he kept them under his eye at the Royal Oak. When they were sober on the following day, he served them with the notices in the presence of Bushell the landlord; and they being little loth to accept them, the enlistment was thus far complete. Thereupon they were taken up to Redburn Manor, where the legal formalities were duly fulfilled in the presence of Sir Archibald in his capacity of a county magistrate.

## CHAPTER VII.

FREDERICK LONSDALE

A WEEK had elapsed since the arrival of Sergeant Langley in the village of Oakleigh: and during this period he had succeeded in ensnaring half-a-dozen of the finest young men of the place, including the two whose enlistment we have specially described. Through the officious intervention of Mr. Bates the barber, Frederick Lonsdale had been pointed out to the recruiting-sergeant; and when this individual beheld the fine person of the young man, his erect carriage, and his superior air, he felt that his visit to Oakleigh would scarcely be regarded as completely successful unless he took away Frederick Lonsdale along with the other recruits. He coveted that young man for the military service with as ardent a longing as a sportsman covets a particular horse or dog, or as a schoolboy covets a particular cake in a pastry-cook's window. This being the case Mr. Langley was resolved to leave no stone unturned to the accomplishment of his purpose.

But during this week, what had Frederick Lonsdale been doing? From morning to night

had he wandered about the country in search of employment; and every evening had he returned unsuccessful to his little lodging at Mr. Bates's house. He had not omitted to visit the trysting-place of love on the bank of the stream in the grove in the hope that Lucy perhaps might be there: but not once did she make her appearance—and he therefore feared that she was kept a close prisoner at home. Gloomy and dark were his prospects as day after day beheld his fruitless search for employment; and day after day likewise did the despondency of his soul deepen. He had hoped until the very last that he should perhaps obtain work so near to Oakleigh that he might still continue a resident there: but at length he was compelled to come to the conclusion that this hope existed no longer. Carefully as he had husbanded his little resources, they were now completely exhausted; and on the seventh evening after he had partaken of a crust on his return from his day's weary wanderings, he found himself without the means of procuring the morrow's breakfast.

It was about nine o'clock that he was sitting in his little bed-room, reflecting mournfully upon his position, when Mr. Bates slowly opened the door; and looking in, said, "How miserable you seem, Fred. I can't bear to see you in this state. Why, what ails you, man? Never despond! I don't."

"You know how I am situated, Mr. Bates," replied Frederick, alluding to his unsuccessful endeavors to obtain work. "I only ask to eat the bread of honest industry; but even this is denied me. What am I to do?"

"What are you to do?" cried Bates. "Why, if I was in your situation, and a fine, young, strapping fellow as you are, I know what I would do."

"Ah!" ejaculated Lonsdale, with a kind of start; for he at once comprehended the little barber's allusion.

"To be sure! I see you understand. Why, Fred, you was never made for a laborer: you ought to be an officer and a gentleman."

"An officer and a gentleman?" echoed Lonsdale, gazing upon the barber with a look of surprise. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, that promotion from the ranks is quite common now," replied Bates. "That recruiting-sergeant who is in the village, told me a lot of cases of that kind which had come to his knowledge. It was quite in a conversational way, mind you—and with no particular object in view; and therefore to be fully believed. A young fellow like you, would soon get made a corporal, and then a sergeant; and if you behaved well, you would be made an officer. There's no doubt of that; and if you was to go into the army—why, in a few years' time, you would come back to Oakleigh, astonishing us all with epaulettes on your shoulders and a sash round your waist."

Frederick Lonsdale had gradually become thoughtful as the barber thus spoke; and he fell into a deep reverie. Who can wonder if bright visions presented themselves to his mind? It is often in the brightest of those visions that the wounded and crushed spirit seeks refuge

from the darkest despair. Reverie frequently, to even the strongest minds, what opium is to the Oriental, who luxuriates in the paradise-creating drug. Thus was it now with Frederick Lonsdale. Was he not young?—and was not Lucy Davis younger still? Was he not convinced of her fidelity?—and what would be the interval of a few years at their time of life, if at the expiration thereof he could come back to the village, having achieved for himself an independent position, and therefore in circumstances to claim her as his bride? Oh! if this could be accomplished, would not it prove a crowning reward for the delay that should take place in the meantime? Yes—assuredly the soldier's career was the one which now offered bright prospects to the contemplation of Frederick Lonsdale.

"Mr. Bates," he said, suddenly starting from his chair, "I am decided. I have no more money. If I remain another week in your house, I shall perhaps be unable to pay your rent; and I know you cannot afford to be without it. Besides, I have no longer the means of procuring bread—and I will not subsist upon charity. My mind is therefore made up; and to-morrow morning I will go to the recruiting sergeant."

"Why not to-night?" asked Bates, resolved to strike while the iron was hot. "I am just about to toddle up to the Oak to meet a few friends, and the sergeant is safe to be there in the parlor. You will find him a very agreeable man—quite a gentleman, indeed—"

"No, I will not go to the public-house," replied Lonsdale; "but as my resolve is taken, I have not the slightest objection to finish the matter this evening."

"In that case, come along with me, and I will call Langley out to speak to you."

Frederick Lonsdale accordingly accompanied Mr. Bates to the Royal Oak; but he waited outside while the barber entered. The same scene was taking place in the parlor which we have described in an earlier chapter—that is to say, some of the tradesmen were assembled there to listen to Sergeant Langley's wonderful stories; and he, in all the glory of his uniform and the stateliness of his rank, was smoking his pipe, quaffing his ale, and holding forth upon the wonders he had seen in foreign countries. Mr. Bates entered the parlor with a mysterious look; and, walking straight up to the sergeant, he whispered in his ear, "It's all right; Lonsdale will enlist."

The sergeant laid down his pipe in a grave and deliberate manner; and rising from his chair, obeyed the barber's signal to follow him from the room. They went forth together; and in the clear starlight which poured its silver flood upon the earth, they beheld Lonsdale pacing to and fro opposite the public-house.

"Fred, permit me to introduce you to Mr. Langley," said the barber.

"Mr. Lonsdale, I am rejoiced to make your acquaintance," observed the sergeant, taking the young man's hand and shaking it with what appeared to be a cordial warmth. "I understand that you have made up your mind to serve your King. It is a noble resolution, and gallantly taken. Why," exclaimed Langley, stepping

back a couple of paces, and surveying Lonsdale slowly from head to foot, "you will make the finest man in the regiment. Our captain in command of the depot will be proud of you: our colonel when he comes home will be delighted!"—then placing his hand upon Lonsdale's shoulder, he said in a lower tone of mysterious confidence, "I am very much mistaken if there won't be an epaulette here before long."

There was something in the sergeant's manner which Lonsdale did not like. Indeed, he already half read the character of the individual; and for a moment he was smitten with distrust of the bright representations which had been made to him by the barber, and of the brilliant hopes which he had formed in his own reverie. But if he averted his gaze from the rose coloured picture, it was only to encounter the sombre gloom of his own present circumstances: and therefore, with the desperation of a man who suddenly adopts the only alternative which appears to promise the slightest retrieval of his shattered fortunes, he said in a firm tone, "Mr. Langley, if it is only for seven years that the enlistment is made,\* I desire to become a soldier."

"You have been rightly informed, my young friend," responded Langley, "as to the term for which you enlist: and never had I greater pleasure in proffering any one the King's money," added the sergeant, with a tinge of triumph permeating his wonted pomposity. "Therefore in his Majesty's name do I enlist you thus!"—and he put ten shillings into the hand of Frederick Lonsdale.

"Now what ceremony am I to go through?" inquired the young man.

"Nothing more at present, my friend, unless you choose to come and take a glass with me."

"I would rather not," rejoined Frederick, "and trust you will excuse me. Do not think that I shall retract from the step which I have taken. There is no chance of *that*," he added somewhat bitterly.

"You speak like a man," replied Langley. "For the next two days you can divert yourself in any way you choose. Let me see, this is Thursday. On Saturday evening I shall just serve you with a little notice—a mere matter of form to prove that you have enlisted: and then next Monday morning, at about half-past nine o'clock you will be so kind as to accompany me to some magistrate to finish the ceremony."

"I shall not fail," replied Frederick. "And now I wish you good night."

The young man turned somewhat abruptly away, and hurried home to his little lodging, where he sat down and pondered deeply—yes, and even painfully—upon what he had done. But he did not repent: for if he had not taken this step, what alternative had he?

The Saturday evening came, and the notice of his enlistment was duly presented to him by Sergeant Langley in person and in the presence

of Mr. Bates. Lonsdale in answer to the usual question that the sergeant put, admitted in a firm voice that it was with his own free will and consent he had offered himself as a recruit in his Majesty's service. Sergeant Langley felt his satisfaction to be now complete, and took his leave, reminding the recruit that he would have to attend him on the following Monday morning at half-past nine o'clock.

We must here observe that Frederick Lonsdale had visited the grove as usual that evening—but in vain: Lucy Davis appeared not at the wonted place of meeting. Was she then really a prisoner? Had she heard of the step he had taken? Would she make no effort to see him ere he left Oakleigh? Such were the questions which Lonsdale asked himself, but how could he answer them? He could not. And yet, as he thought that the day was now so near when he would be compelled to turn his back upon the picturesque little village, his heart sank within him at the bare thought of leaving it without bidding farewell to his adored Lucy. And yet, how was he to see her? He dared not proceed to her father's cottage and openly solicit an interview. It would be equally useless to loiter about the vicinage of that dwelling in the hope that she would come forth to speak with him: for if she could issue thence at all, she would have come at the usual hour to their wonted *rendezvous*. There was one hope. Would she not be permitted to repair to church on Sunday? and if so, might she not endeavor to elude her father's vigilance, if only for a few minutes, and fly to the spot where she would be sure to meet him? But, Ah! remembered he not that on the preceding Sunday Lucy did not appear as usual at church? and might she not still remain away, on the one that was now at hand? Was she ill? Heavens! the thought was distraction; and Frederick experienced a bitterness of anguish more poignant than any he had yet known. For his Lucy to be ill, and he in ignorance thereof—or uncertain as to her condition—and at all events unable even to approach her dwelling for the purpose of making an inquiry—Oh, it was almost too much to bear!

It was a prey to varied and conflicting emotions of pain and apprehension that Frederick Lonsdale proceeded to church at the morning's service. The day was serenely beautiful—the sun was shining upon the old yew trees, above which the little spire peeped forth, and the bells were sprinkling the air with their metallic sounds. The villagers, all in their best apparel, were wending their way to the temple of worship; and some of them—chiefly the most aged—paused in the churchyard to contemplate those gravestones which stood there as memorials of departed relatives or friends. Sir Archibald Redburn's carriage rolled up to the gate of the churchyard; and thence descended the Baronet, his lady, and Aunt Jane: but Gerald Redburn seldom attended church service—he generally happened to be very unwell indeed on a Sunday. As the Baronet, with his wife on one arm and his sister on the other, threaded the churchyard towards the

\* Previous to April, 1829, enlistments were made for specific periods. It was at the date just mentioned that the War Office issued a warrant ordering all subsequent enlistments to be for life.



little porch of the building itself,—a liveried footman following with the Bibles and prayer-books,—most respectful were the salutations that greeted the patrician party from every side. Frederick Lonsdale was the only exception; and he purposely moved away from the path, so as not pointedly to refuse his homage to the great man and the ladies. But he could not so far forget the dignity of his manhood as to afford any testimonials of respect or courtesy towards the individual who had thrown him out of work.

It was, as a matter of course, known throughout the village that Frederick had enlisted; and amongst the humbler inhabitants he thus found himself on his way to church an object of marked sympathy. On entering the building, he took his usual seat up in the gallery; and the glance that he flung towards Mr. Davis's pew showed him that neither father nor daughter was there. The sergeant entered just before the service began, followed by those recruits who had already gone through all the final ceremonies, and whose condition was indicated by the different-colored ribbons which had been fastened to their hats. Throughout the entire service no one appeared to pay greater attention or to be more impressed with it, than Mr. Langley. That service passed over, and Mr. Davis's pew remained unoccupied.

But still there was the afternoon service: might they not come to that? Lonsdale hoped that it would prove so; but again was he disappointed—the pew remained unoccupied, as in the morning. At about seven o'clock he was wending his way slowly along the bank of the stream where he had so often met his well-beloved Lucy—where she had so solemnly plighted him her faith ten days back—but where they had been so rudely separated by the sudden appearance of her father. This was now indeed Frederick's last hope. But was it doomed to be disappointed? Ah! what is that rustling amidst the trees on the opposite bank? whose form is it that flits across the little bridge? Oh, joy, joy! it is Lucy: and she sinks half-fainting in his arms!

"Dearest girl, what happiness!" he exclaimed, as he pressed her to his heart: and in the bliss of that moment he almost forgot every trouble that he had been doomed to know.

"Tell me, Frederick—tell me," cried the girl in an exciting manner, "is it true that—"

"It is true," he responded, knowing full well the nature of the question she was about to put.

The color forsook her cheeks in a moment, and her head dropped upon his shoulder as if she were about to faint: but a gush of tears burst forth, and relieved the surcharged anguish of her heart.

"Dearest Lucy, what could I do?" exclaimed Frederick. "Every other hope was dead—"

"Frederick," she interrupted him, flinging her terrified looks around; "we must not remain here. When my father misses me, this is the first place to which he will fly in search of me."

"Let us penetrate farther into the grove," said Lonsdale. "You remember the huge oak-tree in the midst—"

"Yes, yes," she replied, the tears still streaming down her cheeks "it was there that you first told me that you loved me! We will proceed thither—it is a sacred spot for us."

Through the grove they went, in too much haste to renew the discourse until they reached the tree beneath whose shade the avowals of love had for the first time passed, and where there was a seat. Upon this they placed themselves; and long and tenderly did they gaze upon each other ere silence was again broken. Their looks mutually expressed pain and sorrow: for while on the one hand Frederick Lonsdale observed that Lucy was pale and careworn, she on the other hand recognized but too plainly the traces of a corroding grief on the countenance of her lover.

"I have been kept a close prisoner at home," said Lucy, at length breaking silence. "My father has scarcely stirred from the house: and would you believe it, Frederick?—when he has gone forth, he has locked me up in my chamber. Oh! or else all these days would not have passed without my seeing you!"

"And I, dear Lucy, have been every evening to the bank of the stream in the hope of meeting you there. At church too—But thank heaven, you have come at last!"

"Yes—through the kindness of poor Martha," replied Lucy, speaking of the servant-girl, "I have this evening for the first time been enabled to elude the vigilance of my harsh parent. But I must not remain long away, or that poor girl will be made to suffer for the sympathy she has shown me. Let us talk about yourself, Fred. It was through her that I heard the terrible rumor that—But is it indeed true? and can it not be remedied? Have you gone too far to be enabled to retreat?"

"Oh! wherefore should you ask me, dearest Lucy? What hope had I? You know not the many, many weary miles I have walked in the endeavor to procure work: but all in vain!—What then, I ask, was I to do?"

"Had you no faith in my love, Frederick?" inquired Lucy with a tender look of deprecation.

"Oh! faith the most sublime," exclaimed Frederick, with a degree of enthusiasm which convinced her that his confidence in her love was as great as the love which he himself bore for her. "Yes—I said to myself that we were both young—that we had faith in each other—and that we might wait for better times."

"Alas! Frederick, I could not console myself with that hope," murmured Lucy, her head drooping upon his shoulder. "So many things happen in this world, that when once a separation takes place," she continued with a profound mournfulness in her tone, "the worst is to be apprehended. If you do become a soldier—and the idea is dreadful—but if you do, I repeat, your regiment may be ordered abroad—perhaps to India, or to other colonies, where, as I have learnt and as you also know, fighting often takes place, and where too there are virulent diseases—in short, a thousand perils—Oh, Frederick! the idea of all this is more than I can bear;" and again did the tears gush forth plentifully.

"Sweet, dearest girl, I must entreat you to compose yourself!" cried Lonsdale, covering her cheeks with kisses. "Have I not already anguish sufficient in my heart to be spared the idea that I shall leave you thus terribly afflicted—thus woefully distressed? Tranquillize yourself therefore, beloved one, for my sake."

"I will, I will," responded Lucy; but it was in the hysterical accents of despair—and she gazed with an earnest doting fondness upon her lover, all the fervor of her soul giving force and power to that tender and endearing gaze of her's. "But tell me," she continued, in a calmer voice, "is there nothing to be done? can you not retreat from the step you have taken?"

"Again you ask me that question, dearest Lucy," said Lonsdale; "but were I to recall what I have done, should I not relapse into the same hopeless state as before?"

"Listen to me, Frederick," replied Lucy, with a firmer as well as more tranquil demeanor than she had yet shown during the present interview. "Think not that the words I am about to address unto you are inconsistent with a young maiden's modesty—or that I am too forward in speech or conduct: for it is this cruel emergency—this bitter crisis—which has made me resolve to speak as I am about to do. I love you, Frederick—full well do you know how much I love you. I have pledged my faith to you; and heaven is my witness that I will never be another's. I hold myself as your destined wife—I look upon you as my affianced husband. If therefore it be possible for you to retrieve the rash step you have taken, I will not hesitate to accompany you to the altar!"

Lucy had spoken with a calm firmness until she reached the concluding words that she had just uttered; and then her accents became low and tremulous; and with half-averted looks, she bent down her blushing countenance.

"Oh! my beloved Lucy, how deeply and how fervently do I thank you for what you have just said!" exclaimed Frederick, pressing her to his heart. "But even were it possible, would you not be wedding poverty? would you not be rendering yourself an outcast from a comfortable home, to share perhaps the wanderings of a laborer in search of work—a mere vagabond—a tramp—Oh, heavens! it is impossible that, adoringly as I love you, I could be so intensely selfish as to permit you to make such a sacrifice on my account!"

"Think not, dearest Frederick, that what I have just said," replied Lucy, speaking firmly and calmly again, "was the unpremeditated rashness of a loving heart excited by the sense of a piquant affliction. No; I have pondered upon the proposal I have just made to you;—and again I must entreat you to listen, dear Frederick. My father has never been sparing with his money towards me; and he has taken a pride in seeing me dress well—or at least he has urged me to dress even above my position. But I have been frugal and economical with the resources thus placed at my command. In short, I have some ten or twelve pounds—my own little savings. Again must I beseech you not to consider my words unimmediately or forward—"

"Heavens! does the most devoted love that woman can possibly testify, need such excuses as this?" cried Frederick Lonsdale, again lavishing his caresses upon the maiden.

"I hope not—and I feel that it is not so with you," returned Lucy; then with the glimmering of a smile upon her countenance—for she began to think that there was a hope of seeing her little plan realized, as Frederick thus suffered her to proceed without the fatal announcement that it was *too late*—she said, "Well, I was developing my project to you. In this neighborhood it is but too clear there is no hope for you; but elsewhere the same tyrannical ban will not be set upon your name. With my little savings, we might commence the world; and perhaps the education you have received may warrant the hope of your finding elsewhere some more suitable employment than that to which you have been accustomed. Frederick, dear Frederick—within the last few days I have thought much and upon many things: affliction and solitude appear to have given my mind scope for enlarging its experience. I understand now wherefore it is that you have remained altogether in this humble and obscure village, and why you have not endeavored to carve out for yourself some higher career or superior calling, in a city or town where your talents and your requirements might be rendered available. Yes, Frederick, I know that it was in order to be near me that you have accepted so lowly a position hitherto; and it is this consideration as well as any other, which has induced me to make of my own accord the proposal I have set before you. For I feel, Frederick, that a love so sincere and so disinterested as yours requires whatsoever the world may consider to be a sacrifice on my part—but which will be no sacrifice at all."

"Lucy, you have sketched out a plan of happiness which seems to be almost too bright for realization!"

"Oh! do not tell me that I must bid farewell to hope," cried the girl, gazing with the tenderest anxiety on his countenance. "Surely, surely, there are some means for you to retrieve the step you have taken. Oh, do not say that it is irrevocable—"

"No—heaven be thanked, it is not irrevocable!" replied Frederick: and as he thus spoke, a perfect torrent of joy shot forth from the eyes of his beauteous companion, her whole countenance becoming radiant with hope.

"Tell me then," she cried, "what is there to be done to enable you to rescue yourself from the power of the recruiting-sergeant?"

"To-morrow at half-past nine o'clock, dearest Lucy," replied Frederick, "I am to accompany him before Sir Archibald Redburn to complete the formalities. Sir Archibald will ask me whether I still persevere in my resolve to become a soldier. I can say No. He will then tell me that if within twenty-four hours from that moment—that is to say, if by ten o'clock on Tuesday morning I return the bounty I have received, with twenty shillings smart money, and the payment of the sergeant's expenses—making some two pounds in all—I may be freed from the shackles of enlistment."

"Oh, heaven be thanked that it is so!"

claimed Lucy: and in the enthusiasm of her joy she hung her arms round Frederick's neck and kissed him of her own accord. "Then you consent to my proposal? Yes, yes—I see that you will! And think not, Frederick," she added, more slowly and seriously, "that because in one sense I shall prove a disobedient daughter,—I mean in flying from my father's house, and against his will bestowing my hand where my heart is already bound,—think not on this account that I shall prove a disobedient wife also!"

"Heaven forbid that I should entertain such an idea!" cried Frederick, his looks showing how pained he was that his Lucy should have even thought it necessary to give him such an assurance. "No, my dearest girl—I am now receiving too many proofs of your devoted love and your all-trusting devotion, not to feel how great is the treasure that I shall possess in you!"

"And now forgive me, dear Fred," she resumed, pressing his hand in grateful acknowledgment of the words he had just uttered,—“pardon me, if I again touch upon a purely business matter. This money which is required to procure your release, must be paid, you say, by Tuesday morning. I will manage to convey it to you to-morrow evening. Possibly I may contrive to meet you myself: but if not, we must trust Martha in the affair. She loves me well, and will do anything to serve me. Therefore, if I come not myself, you may rely upon seeing her. Let us not appoint our old trysting-place at the bridge, for fear my father's suspicions should be awakened. But let *this* be the spot to-morrow evening—within half an hour of sunset. And now one word more. Should it be impossible for either of us to get out to-morrow evening, there is no doubt that Martha can manage to run down into the village between seven and eight o'clock in the morning. You say that the money need not be paid till ten; and therefore in any case there will be ample time. Martha will discover that there is no tea or no bread for the breakfast—or some excuse of that kind—and she will speed to fetch what is needful. Can she not deliver a little sealed packet for you at Mr. Bates's?"

"Yes," replied Frederick. "Bates is well disposed towards me; and he will punctually deliver anything that may be entrusted to him for me. Ah, my dearest Lucy, how can I ever sufficiently testify my gratitude towards you for all this forethought?"

"Gratitude?" murmured Lucy, half reproachfully, half archly: "do not I possess something that is above the comparative coldness of gratitude?"

"Yes, yes—my love—my ardent, devoted, unchangeable love!" cried Frederick, embracing her with enthusiasm.

"In two days, dearest Frederick," she said, "you will be once more free; and then——"

"Oh, yes—and *then* you must not delay the consummation of my happiness. We will away to some town whither there is no danger of immediate pursuit; and there our hands shall be united."

The lovers embraced each other fondly, and

then separated,—Lucy flitting back to the cottage, which she succeeded in reaching ere her father's return,—and Frederick retracing his way to his humble lodging at Bates's house, but in a very different condition of mind from what he experienced when he issued forth thence an hour previously

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE SMART-MONEY.

LONSDALE said not a word to the barter of what his intention was—nor to Mr. Langley, when at the appointed time on Monday morning he repaired to the Royal Oak to accompany that individual up to the Manor House. The sergeant was dressed with as much neatness and precision as ever; and he looked as stately and as pompous as was his wont. It was his invariable policy to maintain the most friendly demeanor towards his recruits until the final scene of the enlisting ceremonies had rivetted the chains of the service inextricably upon their limbs: but whether he subsequently treated them with an equal affability and kindness, we shall perhaps hereafter have an opportunity of seeing. For the present it is sufficient to observe that he still maintained his recruiting smile, as he proffered his hand to Frederick Lonsdale.

"Well, my friend," he said, "you are indeed punctual. Upon my honor, I think you will become the flower of the regiment. It is quite delightful to see such punctuality. Therefore, as Sir Archibad has received an intimation from me that I am about to pay him a last visit ere leaving this neighborhood, we will not keep him waiting. It is at ten punctually we are to be at the Manor."

Frederick was half inclined to deal frankly at once with the sergeant, and to avow his intentions: but as they had a walk of two miles before them, he did not wish to be exposed to whatsoever cajolery or threats Mr. Langley might think fit to adopt in order to induce him to change his mind and adhere to his enlistment. He accordingly said nothing; and they set out upon their walk. During the whole way Sergeant Langley expatiated in his usual strain upon the happiness of a soldier's life; and Frederick continued to listen in silence—or to speak more correctly, we should say that he did not listen at all; for his every thought was absorbed in the happy and unlooked-for change which since the previous evening had taken place in his prospects. On their way towards the Manor House, they had to pass within a hundred yards of Mr. Davis's cottage; and Frederick rivetted his eyes upon the windows in the hope of catching a glimpse of that countenance which was the brightest and most beauteous in the whole world for him. Nor was he disappointed. He beheld an upper window open abruptly, and a white handkerchief was waved for an instant. It was then withdrawn—the window was closed again—but above the muslin blind he did recognize the countenance of his well-beloved!



This little incident took place so rapidly that the sergeant noticed it not: he was looking straight forward as he marched along with true military precision, his cane tapping the pathway simultaneously with the tread of his footsteps, and his tongue all the while giving vent to his wonted inflations respecting the soldier's life and the wonders he had seen in foreign countries. But how cheered was Frederick Lonsdale by that little circumstance! It was a sign to convince him that the meeting of the previous evening remained unsuspected by Mr. Davis, and that nothing was changed in the arrangements between himself and his well-beloved. Lighter grew his heart and lighter too his footsteps, as he proceeded towards the Manor in company with Sergeant Langley. In another quarter of an hour the front entrance was reached; and the hall-porter, fluming in a scarlet coat and yellow-plush breeches, at once conducted Mr. Langley and Frederick to a parlor where Sir Archibald was accustomed to transact whatsoever magisterial business came under his cognizance. The porter bade them wait a few minutes, while he went to inform Sir Archibald of their arrival. They were not kept in attendance long: for Sir Archibald Redburn soon made his appearance, with a port as stately even as that of the sergeant himself. He suffered no sign of what he inwardly felt to appear upon his countenance, as he acknowledged the sergeant's military bow, and then took his seat at the head of the table: but in his heart he experienced a secret pleasure at the idea of so troublesome a character as he considered Lonsdale to be, having fallen into the fangs of enlistment. Frederick had for courtesy's sake bowed respectfully: but the Baronet took not the slightest notice of him.

"Now, what is this?" he asked, arranging some papers on the desk before him. "I suppose it's another recruiting case."

"It is, Sir Archibald," replied Langley, who stood drawn up in the "first position," to use a technical phrase borrowed from his own military sphere.

"Well," resumed the Baronet, addressing Lonsdale, "here's the thirty-fourth clause of the Mutiny Act, and which it is my duty to make to you:"—then have read it over, Sir Archibald continued, "I need not ask your name nor condition, because I know them both. But I must inquire whether you voluntarily enlisted?"

"I did, Sir Archibald Redburn," replied Lonsdale. "But with your permission——"

"Don't interrupt me now," said the magistrate sternly. "Wait till you are questioned. I am going to read to you the Articles of War in respect to mutiny and desertion; and then you will have to take the oath of allegiance, which I shall administer."

"But, Sir Archibald Redburn," again interjected Lonsdale, "I think I can save you some trouble——"

"Eh, what?" exclaimed the Baronet: "you surely are not going to carry your rebellious principles so far as to refuse the oath?"

"Why, I am astonished at you, Lonsdale," said the sergeant, tapping his cane upon the

carpet with sufficient violence to drive a hole through it.

"Is there not, Sir Archibald, some other clause in that Act," inquired Frederick calmly, "which you are likewise bound to communicate?"

"Well, here's the thirty-fifth clause," ejaculated the Baronet, petulantly; for he began to think that Lonsdale meant to withdraw from his engagement. "But it's a mere matter of form—there's nothing really in it——"

"Nevertheless, sir," observed Lonsdale firmly, "with your permission I should like to hear it read."

"Oh, I will tell you the substance," exclaimed the Baronet: then with a very ill grace, he continued to observe, "The whole tenor of the thirty-fifth clause is this—that a person declaring his dissent from his enlistment, and on returning the enlisting money, with twenty shillings in addition for the expenses incurred on his account, and the sergeant's fees, shall be forthwith discharged."

"And is there no specified delay allowed for the payment of this money?" asked Lonsdale.

"Why, but you are not going to shirk off?" exclaimed Sergeant Langley, becoming as red as a turkey cock.

"It would be a most rascally proceeding if he did," said the Baronet with a brow-beating air. "Come, no more of this nonsense, but listen while I read——"

"I beg your pardon, Sir Archibald—I do dissent from this enlistment," exclaimed Frederick; "and moreover I demand a delay of twenty-four hours to pay the smart-money."

"Well, this is the shabbiest, dirtiest thing I ever knew in all my life," said Mr. Langley: and again the stout stick was jobbed down upon the floor.

"And pray, what is the reason, sirrah, that you have made a fool of this person who is in his Majesty's service, and have likewise stultified me who hold the commission of the peace? Come, sir—atone for your impertinence at once—take the oath of allegiance and have done with it. What other chance have you but to enlist?"

"With all due respect, sir, I have changed my mind," answered Frederick. "I am truly sorry that I should have given the recruiting-sergeant any trouble in the matter——"

"Well, there's enough of it," ejaculated the Baronet, rising from his seat; "and there's the door, sirrah. Good morning to you, sergeant. But mind, Frederick Lonsdale, if that money is not paid into the sergeant's hand in the presence of a witness by ten o'clock to-morrow morning," continued the Baronet, looking at his watch, "you will have to be brought up before me again; and then if you don't take the oath of allegiance, I will commit you to prison, where you will stay till you do."

Frederick Lonsdale made no reply to this speech, but passed out of the room, closely followed by the sergeant, whose countenance wore a very awful aspect. They threaded the hall, and issued forth from the mansion.

"Now, you rascal," said Langley, "how dare you gammon me in this manner? You infernal

scoundrel, I have a very great mind to knock your head off! Thunder and lightning! was there ever such a mean, beggarly, paltry affair as this?"

Frederick fired up in an instant; and with flashing eyes, he exclaimed, "Mr. Langley, these are words that I cannot put up with—"

"Silence, sir!" ejaculated the sergeant, in a thundering tone of command. "You are a soldier in his Majesty's service; and I will have you to know that I am your officer. March on, sir—he quick, I say—get you in front, you snivelling scoundrel!"

Lonsdale's hand was raised to strike the bully down; but, quick as lightning did a thought flash to his mind. If he struck the sergeant, there was a justice of the peace close by—the one whose presence they had just left—who would rejoice in committing him to jail for the assault; and then how quickly would his hopes and those of his beloved Lucy be dashed to the ground! It nevertheless cost him a tremendous effort to restrain his indignation; but he did so, and walked in front.

"It's an uncommon lucky thing for you, young fellow, that you didn't touch me," resumed the sergeant, who perhaps would have sworn that he had, were it not that the hall-porter was standing on the steps, and beheld everything that passed. "However, we shall see what what will happen yet. It's easier to get into my clutches than out of them, I can tell you that; and if his Majesty's service is to be treated in this way—why, the sooner Parliament House passes other laws, the better. It's a regular case of bilk. I am robbed of a recruit just as bad as if I was robbed of my purse in a wood. But it isn't Sergeant Langley, of his Majesty's—th Regiment of Infantry that is to be gammoned, and humbugged, and assified in this way."

Thus did Mr. Langley continue to blurt forth his venom against Frederick Lonsdale, who, for Lucy's sake, was resolved to endure all possible insults and indignities, rather than be provoked to retaliation. The sight of the cottage, and another waving of the handkerchief from the window, together with another glimpse of the countenance of his adored one, strengthened him in this resolve; and he continued his way towards the village, without taking any apparent notice of the sergeant's foul abuse. Not for a single moment did Mr. Langley cease to heap upon him every insulting epithet and goading taunt which he could possibly think of; and as the sergeant was by no means deficient in volubility of language of every kind and description, it was a perfect torrent of Billingsgate that thus flowed forth from his lips. In this manner they reached the door of Mr. Bates's house; and as Frederick was about to enter the dwelling, the sergeant called out, "Stop!"

Lonsdale—remembering that he was still a recruit until the smart-money should be paid, and therefore subject to the orders of the non-commissioned officer—at once obeyed. But as he turned round and confronted this individual, his pale cheeks, his flashing eyes, and his quivering lips, showed how much it cost him to subdue an outburst of terrific resentment.

"Now, you fellow," said Mr. Langley, standing in the "first position," as erect as a statue, with his right hand upon his stick, and his left arm hanging straight down by his side, while his heels were together, and his toes pointed out, to form the precise angle requisite—"now, you fellow, it's my order that you consider yourself under arrest for the present. You will go and keep your own room. You won't stir out, or yet even come down to Mr. Bates's shop. Take care of yourself—for I shall keep an eye upon you—so mind what you are about. And now be off up to your room, you sneaking scoundrel!"

Lonsdale was thunderstruck. He had not foreseen this: he was not even aware that the sergeant could exercise such an authority over him: but he instantaneously perceived that it must indeed be so, and that he was thus far at the mercy of the red-coated tyrant. But how was he to keep his appointment in the wood, with Lucy or Martha? An expression of anguish swept over his countenance; and the sergeant perceiving it—though, of course, not understanding the particular feeling which conjured it up—gave a malignant grin, very different indeed from his recruiting smile!

"I beg you to observe, Mr. Langley," said Frederick, "that I have not intentionally offered you any offence."

"Go up to your room, sirrah—and stay there!" vociferated the sergeant. "I shall come and inquire after you every hour—perhaps oftener; and if you dare stir out, I shall at once have you apprehended as a deserter. And now be off!"

With these words the sergeant turned away, and walked with majestic stateliness towards the Royal Oak.

"You had better do as he orders, Lonsdale," said Mr. Bates, who, with a lather-brush in one hand and a razor in the other, had left a customer half shaved, that he might contemplate this extraordinary scene.

Frederick, who had lingered for a few moments upon the door-step, was recalled by that recommendation, which he took to be a friendly one, from the stupor of dismay into which he had been thrown; and he at once ascended to his chamber. There he sat himself down and gave way to his reflections. At first he was well nigh reduced to despair, as he saw the impossibility of keeping the appointment at the oak-tree in the grove: but then he recollected that Lucy had spoken of the possibility of neither herself nor Martha being enabled to meet him there in the evening, in which case the servant-girl was to find an excuse for coming into the village in the morning. This circumstance at once relieved his mind of the cruel apprehension which had at first seized upon it; and becoming suddenly calm, he said to himself, "It is after all but a transitory venting of this brutal ruffian's spite upon me. Should Lucy or Martha keep the appointment this evening and find that I come not, it will be concluded that something has transpired to prevent me; and therefore Martha will come across in the morning."

His reflections were interrupted by the en-



trance of Mr. Bates who, having just applied to a customer's hair some of the bear's-grease which he manufactured out of hog's-lard was wiping his hands on his already dirty apron.

"What's all this mean, Fred?" he inquired, affecting a great air of sympathy.

"Simply because I changed my mind, Mr. Bates, and withdrew from the enlistment—or rather gave notice that I should withdraw—that red-coated ruffian has heaped upon me the filthiest and most abominable abuse. He has also put me under arrest."

"Have you paid the smart-money, then?" demanded Bates eagerly.

"No, not yet," replied Lonsdale. "And now, my good friend," he added in a confidential tone, "you could do me a particular service—"

"Anything in the world, Fred!" ejaculated the barber. "What is it, my dear fellow?"

"Either to-night, or early to-morrow morning," returned Lonsdale, "a little parcel or letter will be delivered here for me. You must take charge of it, and bring it up to me immediately—as it is of the highest importance."

"Ah! I understand," said the barber: "it's the smart-money that you have got to pay? Well, I am heartily glad you have found a friend to assist you. Depend upon it, directly the packet comes I will bring it up; and what's more I will sit at home the whole evening to wait for it, instead of going up to Bushel's to take my glass and hear the sergeant's stories."

"I am truly obliged for your kindness," exclaimed Frederick, in the most truthful confidence. "Oh, if you had seen how that man suddenly showed himself in his true colors just now! But you did behold enough to convince you what he is."

"Ah!" said the barber, shaking his head, "I am afraid I have been deceived in him."

"Oh! what an escape I have had," continued Lonsdale. "I shudder at the bare idea of having stood the chance of falling into the power of such a brutal tyrant. Heaven help the poor unfortunate fellows who will have to accompany him away from Oakleigh to-morrow!"

"Then you are sure of getting the money, Fred?" observed the barber. "Because if not," he added with every appearance of the most friendly interest, "I will try and borrow it for you."

"A thousand thanks for your kindness, but I am certain of being able to obtain it."

"So much the better," rejoined Bates. "And now keep quiet up here: don't put yourself any farther into the power of Langley—"

"Not for worlds!" ejaculated Frederick, with a shudder, as he thought of what poor Lucy would suffer if anything should happen through his imprudence to frustrate the plans which she in her loving devotedness had formed, and which had been agreed upon between them.

Mr. Bates left Lonsdale to himself, and descended into his shop: but instead of remaining there, he put on his hat and hurried off to the Royal Oak, where he found Mr. Langley endeavoring to soothe his indignation by means of a pipe of tobacco and a pint of Bushel's old ale. The conference which now took place between the barber and the sergeant, was not long—but it was important: and when Mr. Bates took his

leave, a couple of half crowns were clinking in his waistcoat pocket that were not there when he entered the public-house. Moreover Mr. Langley was now enabled to enjoy his pipe and his pint with a far greater zest than he would had it not been for the officious barber's visit.

Meanwhile Lonsdale had betaken himself to the few books that he possessed; and though the hours passed slowly and heavily away, yet still they did pass. Every now and then Bates came creeping up to inform him that the sergeant had just called to inquire if he were keeping close to his room; and at each successive visit Mr. Bates expressed himself in stronger terms at the tyranny thus practised against Lonsdale. Sunset was now approaching; and Frederick thought to himself that possibly—indeed most probably—either Lucy or Martha was at that moment waiting for him in the grove; and so friendly did Bates appear, that he was almost inclined to reveal the secret of his love to him, and get him to go to the trysting-place. But then he thought that it would be far more prudent to keep the secret altogether inviolable: because he feared Bates's garrulity, although he placed the utmost reliance on the man's friendship. Besides, he felt assured that Lucy would send him the money by some means or other; and therefore, having no fear for the issue, he resolved upon leaving matters to take their chance.

The sun went down—Frederick lighted his candle in his little room, and continued reading. Ten o'clock struck by the village church; and Bates came up to tell him that no packet had arrived, but that Langley had been down to assure himself that he kept under arrest.

"The parcel will not therefore be delivered to-night," said Lonsdale: "but it is sure to be here in the morning. I have no doubt upon the subject."

"I am delighted to hear it," answered the barber. "By ten therefore to-morrow, you will be a free man. And now good night, Fred—and pleasant dreams to you."

"Good night," responded Lonsdale: and soon after Bates had quitted him, he sought his humble pallet, to dream of Lucy and happiness.

When he awoke in the morning, the church clock was striking six. He rose and dressed himself with a light heart. This was to be the day of his emancipation from the power of the odious despot Langley. In a few hours indeed, that individual would not dare look, much more speak, a taunt against him! And, Oh! to be free to conduct his Lucy to the altar—free to bear her away to some large town or city where they might set up their little house-keeping and take measures to earn their livelihood! Oh, how sweet would be the bread which he should thus acquire, and which she would share! He had no longer any mistrust for the future: all his prospects were now of roseate hues and gilding gloriously blended. His imagination took wings and soared high up in the heaven of hope. When the marriage was accomplished, night not Mr. Davis relent? did he not love his daughter? and would he not forgive her? Yes: this was to be expected and then their happiness would be complete.



His frugal breakfast had been quickly disposed of: for his heart was too full of happiness to permit him to linger over it. The radiant pageantry of his thoughts had borne time swiftly away in their brilliant train, and it was now striking eight o'clock.

"Surely Martha will not be long? She ought to have been here by this," he said to himself; but still confident that the sum, so vitally indispensable, could not possibly fail to arrive, he once more fell into a series of golden dreams. From these he was awakened—or rather startled—by the clock striking again. Had another hour elapsed?—He counted the strokes. Yes: it was nine. And Martha had not yet come! Some one was ascending the stairs—he knew the barber's footsteps—the packet then had arrived? Bates entered the room; and Lonsdale extended his hand to receive the expected missive. The barber thought—or at least appeared to think—that the young man meant to shake hands with him; and when Frederick found that the hand he thus clutched contained nothing, he exclaimed, "Is it not come yet?"

"No—not yet," returned Bates. "I would not come up to you before, for fear any one should bring it in my absence from the shop; and as I knew it was particular, I resolved to wait and receive it myself."

"Go down again, for heaven's sake!" said Lonsdale, in a state of nervous excitement; "and pray do not leave your shop for a moment. You know, my good friend, how important it is!"

"I will attend to it. Never fear. But you must keep close: that scoundrel Langley has posted a couple of the recruits at the door to see that you don't go out—or to stop you if you do."

"Oh, I shall be free of him in a few minutes!" ejaculated the young man. "Pray do go down."

The volatile barber flitted away; and when Frederick was once more alone, he no longer abandoned himself to the dreams of a golden reverie, but paced to and fro in the little chamber in a very excited state. Oh! if the window were in the front of the house, he could watch for Martha's coming: but it looked upon a little yard at the back, and the green fields which stretched beyond. Besides, even if it did command a view of the village-street, all the watching in the world would not make her come a single whit the sooner. But what delayed her? wherefore came she not? Oh! she was sure to come—yes, she was sure!—it could only be a matter of a few minutes—nothing more—there was plenty of time?

Ah! but the minutes were slipping away—and they soon swelled into half-an-hour. Yes, half-past nine, and no Martha—no Lucy!—not a line—not a word of either message or note! What could it mean? A thousand wild thoughts now rushed like a flight of vultures through the young man's brain—horrible ideas fastened themselves upon him. Had Mr. Davis discovered everything? had he taken measures to prevent both his daughter and servant from issuing forth? Or was some vile treachery at

work? He knew not what to think: he tortured himself with conjectures: but amidst them all he never once suspected that Bates could be playing him false.

"It's a quarter to ten," said the barber, thrusting his head into the room.

Lonsdale, in the whirl and confusion of his thoughts, had not heard him ascend the stairs: he was startled by his sudden appearance; and the gleam of hope which had for a moment shot athwart his brain, was once more succeeded by the sombre clouds of suspense—uncertainty—almost despair.

"Go down, go down—and keep watch, for heaven's sake!" he cried: and rushing forward, he literally pushed the barber down the stairs.

Then he stood upon the threshold of his chamber, listening with the door open. Oh, the tortures of that suspense!—Oh, the agonies of that uncertainty! He heard the conversation that was going on amongst the customers in the shop below: they were talking of himself—expressing commiseration and sympathy for him. Then the voice of Bates chimed in, speaking in a similar strain. A thought struck Frederick! He would pen a hasty note to Dr. Colycynth—another to the butcher—and another to the baker, beseeching them to lend him two pounds for a few hours. He flew to the table: but the three notes took five minutes to write—and it was close upon ten o'clock. From the threshold of his chamber he cried out for Bates. The barber rushed up-stairs; and Lonsdale, thrusting the notes into his hand, besought him to despatch three distinct messengers to convey the billets.

"I will, I will," said Bates. "But Langley is down stairs: he has just come in—and he says you must not have your door open."

"Fly, fly!" ejaculated Frederick, and pushing the barber from the room, he closed the door violently to let Mr. Langley know that it was shut. Then, with feverish impatience—with anguish in his brain and awful horror in his heart, did he await the result of his missives. Oh! fool, fool that he was not to have despatched those notes before! Thus did he blame himself for something of which he had not thought.

Minute after minute passed: but no one came. Almost maddened to desperation, he opened the door and listened. Bates was talking in the shop below—others were talking also—and amongst those voices was the well known one of Sergeant Langley.

"Oh! am I to be sacrificed? am I to be lost?" murmured Frederick to himself. "Can it be possible? is it indeed true—or a hideous dream? Just heaven, what will become of poor Lucy? Oh, I shall go mad—I shall go mad!" and leaning against the door-post, he pressed his hands to his throbbing temples, in a state of mind not even to be envied by a wretch about to be led forth to the place of execution.

The clock struck: it was ten. O God, too late! too late!

"Frederick Lonsdale, come down!" cried the voice of the sergeant: and it sounded upon the ears of the almost distracted young man as if having made a bargain with Satan, the time was up and the Evil One was demanding the surrender of his soul.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE DEPARTURE.

WITH men of naturally strong minds there is often a sudden calm which succeeds the wildest grief—that awful calm which is superinduced by despair when the worst is known. It is the calm that seizes like a stupor or a consternation upon those who have been weeping most bitterly at the bed of death; but whose anguish is overawed in a moment when every thing is over. Such a calm was it that now seized upon Frederick Lonsdale; and yielding himself to his destiny, he slowly descended the stairs. In the shop below he beheld the sergeant, on whose countenance there was an expression which might be likened unto the malignant triumph of a fiend: there was indeed at that moment something truly satanic in the man's features—a diabolic gloating over the fallen condition of his victim.

"Really, my dear fellow, I am truly sorry for this," whispered Bates, clutching Frederick's arm. "You know I offered last night to go and borrow the money for you——"

"Yes—you have done everything you could for me," replied Lonsdale, shaking the barber heartily by the hand in his frank and unsuspecting confidence.

"Come," said Langley, "we have no time to lose. Tramp—march—be quick—and let me have none of your nonsense."

The young man bit his lip almost till the blood came, and his countenance was pale as death. The look that he swept around, showed several sympathizing faces; and he thanked them with a glance. At the doorway, two of the recruits, with the ribands flying from their hats, were posted; and as Frederick stepped forth, they also regarded him with commiseration, and gave him to understand by their looks, as plainly as they dared, that it was against their will they had been placed there to keep guard upon him.

Feeling as if completely crushed in spirit, Lonsdale passed out of the village, closely followed by the sergeant. He knew full well in which direction he had to go without being told; and he accordingly bent his steps towards the Manor House. As he neared Davis's cottage, he scarcely had the courage to cast a look in that direction. Oh, what must be Lucy's feelings if she knew all! Suddenly the door of that cottage opened—a female figure came bounding forth: it was Lucy herself!

"Frederick, Frederick!" she cried, in the frenzy of agonising suspense, "what means this? Wherefore still with *him*?"—and she flung her frightened glances towards the sergeant, who was about a dozen yards behind.

"Dearest, dearest Lucy," replied the young man, "you did not send——"

"Heavens!" she exclaimed with a wild shriek: "there has been the foulest treachery! You came not to the oak-tree last evening——"

"No—I could not—I was a prisoner."

"But Martha delivered the packet with her own hand last night at your lodging."

"Ah, Bates!" ejaculated Lonsdale, the light-

ning of suspicion flashing in upon his soul; and he seemed thunderstruck.

"Yes—into his hand she delivered it," cried the almost frantic girl. "I can believe her—I can rely upon her—I am certain that she has not deceived me!"

"Heaven will not permit this great iniquity to go unpunished," said Lonsdale, in a low deep voice, as he sustained the half-fainting form of his adored one in his arms. "Oh! it is terrible—terrible!"

"Now, young man," cried the sergeant, who had stood as erect as possible, gazing upon this scene; "I can't wait for you any more. It's a great kindness on my part, after all you have done, to wait at all;" but the truth is that Mr. Langley was so struck by the extraordinary beauty of the bailiff's daughter, that he had not been able for a few moments to give utterance to a single word.

Scarcely had he thus spoken when Mr. Davis himself came rushing forth from the cottage. Furious with rage, he actually tore Lucy from her lover's arms; and, with a wild cry of despair, she became insensible.

"Villain!" thundered the bailiff, flinging a diabolical glance of hate and rage upon the hapless young man; and he bore his daughter quickly back towards the cottage.

Lonsdale's impulse was to follow at all risk, and insist upon a final interview with his beloved. Not for a moment was he deterred by the presence of Langley: he would have stricken the red-coated ruffian to the ground, reckless of the consequences, had he interfered to stop him. It was another consideration which, flashing to his mind, held him back. For he thought that if he obeyed that impulse, it would only excite the father's fury into madness; and he might visit his rage all the more heavily upon his unhappy daughter. Therefore, with one look of unutterable despair flung upon the inanimate form of her who was being borne away from his view, he sped onwards towards the Manor House.

The sergeant said not a word. Indeed, from the moment they left the barber's shop he had not once opened his lips, save and except when uttering those few words at the interview of the lovers. But if he had now levelled every possible taunt, invective, and insult at Frederick Lonsdale, the unhappy young man would not have heard them; for all his thoughts were absorbed in contemplation of the black treachery which had laid his fondest hopes in the dust. There was confusion in his brain with regard to other things; and it was not until he found himself in the presence of Sir Archibald Redburn, in the same parlour where he had stood in that same presence on the preceding day, that his ideas assumed a collected form again. The Baronet threw out some taunt as to "the trouble which the fellow gave with his vagaries and nonsense;" but Lonsdale replied not. What to him was the miserable spite of that proud over-bearing man, in comparison with the sense of awful wrong and hideous treachery that sat like a nightmare upon his soul? What to him was any petty demonstration of hate that might be shown,



when weighed in the balance with his own limitless woe! Again his thoughts fell into confusion; and after the clauses of the Mutiny Act and the Articles of War were read, he only recollected having heard some humming, drowning sound, the sense of which he had not caught. He was awakened to consciousness again by being roughly told to take up the Bible and swear to the Oath of Allegiance. He obeyed mechanically; and then a feeling such as might be supposed to take possession of a doomed man when his death-sentence is pronounced, seized upon the wretched, wretched Lonsdale.

"Thank heaven, the village will now be rid of a desperate character," exclaimed the Baronet, thrusting his hands into his breeches-pockets and clinking his guineas.

The young man threw upon him a look of blank despair; but, speaking not a word, issued forth from the room. As he was traversing the hall, the rustling of a silk dress met his ears; and he mechanically looked round. It was Miss Redburn, the Baronet's sister, passing towards the staircase; and it instantaneously struck Frederick that she fixed upon him a look so peculiar that nothing short of such a look could have had the effect of arresting his attention for a single moment under such circumstances. It struck him *then* most forcibly, as we have just said; and it frequently haunted him afterwards: for it was a look which he could not understand. It certainly was not spite—nor gloating triumph; and he could not fancy that it was commiseration. She disappeared from his view the next moment; and he issued forth from the hall: but the circumstance we have just related was speedily absorbed in the harrowing thoughts which again rushed back into his soul.

"Now, my fine fellow," exclaimed the sergeant, as he followed our hero down the declivity of the eminence on which the mansion stood, "you can't escape me—you are in my power. As there's often a slip between the cup and the lip, and you are the slipperiest dog I ever came near, I resolved not to say a word more than was necessary till the nail was clenched; but now that it *is* clenched, I don't mind telling you that I will make you smart for all the trouble you have given me. I will pay you off for your infernal insolence. Talk of *you* ever rising from the ranks!—why, you will never even get to be a corporal! There isn't a shadow of a chance if you behaved ever so well—which you won't; for I know you will prove a deuced troublesome customer, and I shall have the pleasure of seeing you fastened up and well trounced before you have been many months at the depot. You will see what a common soldier's life is; and if you don't find it hell upon earth, then my name's not Langley."

In this manner the ruffian went on until the vicinage of Davis's cottage was again reached on the way back to the village. Lonsdale answered him not a word: he had no thought for such a wretch as he. His eyes were now riveted upon the cottage. Would any sign be made? would some indication of a last fare-

well be given forth! Oh, for one glimpse of that dearly-loved countenance, ere he entered upon his dismal career—for such he felt the irresistible presentiment that it would prove!

All on a sudden the crashing of glass was heard; and Lonsdale stopped short. A white hand had been dashed through one of the window-panes on the ground-floor; and the kerchief which the hand grasped, was waved for a moment. The very way in which it was shaken, indicated the frantic excitement of her who thus shook it. Frederick waved his own in response, and then rushed onward with frenzy in his brain. Oh! too well did he comprehend what all that meant! The father had become the savage tyrant—a gaoler watching his captive daughter; and she in her despair had madly dashed her hand through the window to signal that last farewell to her lover. Yes: and that signal not merely conveyed an adieu, but likewise a hope and a pledge,—the hope that better days might come, and a pledge that the heart of his Lucy would remain constant until the end! But, alas! so profound was Frederick's despair—so poignant his affliction—that his soul was inaccessible to hope.

He re-entered the village, followed by the sergeant; and he was taking the direction of the barber's-shop. At least he would have the satisfaction, poor though it were, of upbraiding that man for his black treachery. But no—even this was denied him: for in a stern voice, the sergeant commanded him to proceed to the public-house. Lonsdale already felt that he had lost his manhood—that he was reduced to the condition of a mere automaton—that thenceforth he could only move in pursuance of orders; and he therefore obeyed mechanically. On arriving at the Royal Oak, he was commanded to fasten the colored ribbons to his hat—then to betake himself to the tap-room, and there stay until the hour of departure should arrive. The other recruits had been permitted to visit their friends and bid them farewell. Lonsdale was therefore alone in the tap-room. Seated upon a bench, with his elbows upon his knees, and his countenance buried in his hands, he gave way to his wretched thoughts. But language has no power to describe the intensity of their bitterness.

Presently the door opened; and Langley, tossing in a parcel, said in a gruff brutal voice, "There are your things from Bates's: he has packed them up for you, to save you the trouble. And there," added Langley with a mocking laugh, "is what was forgotten to be delivered to you."

As he uttered these last words, he threw down a little packet; and closing the door violently, stalked away. Lonsdale rushed forward, and seized upon the packet. Ah! it was not for the money which it contained, that he thus caught it up with avidity: *that* was now dress—vile, useless, contemptible dress! But it was because there might be a note inside: and, Oh! to possess a few lines in the hand-writing of his well-beloved. He tore open the brown paper wrapper—some money fell upon the floor—but his fingers clutched a note addressed to himself. Its contents were as follow:—



"Six o'clock, Monday Evening.

"I pen these few lines, dearest Frederick, to let you know that our interview of last evening has remained totally unsuspected by my father; but such is his vigilance over me, that I cannot hope to meet you presently at the place of appointment. Martha however will be there. I have made a complete confidante of the kind-hearted girl; and she will do anything she can to serve us. If by any accident you do not make your appearance at the oak in the grove—and she will wait half-an-hour for you—she will repair at once to Mr. Bates's house, and deliver this packet into his hands. Therefore you see, dearest Frederick, that every precaution is taken to ensure the success of our arrangements. You can of course pay the money at once; and then you will be free. Oh! dearest, dearest Frederick, how happy shall I be presently! At about nine o'clock I shall say to myself, '*He is free by this time—he is no longer a slave, bound hand and foot: he is happy once more.*' These will be my thoughts; and they will prove the source of ineffable bliss.

"Now, dear Frederick, you must every evening repair to our place of appointment, until I succeed in joining you there; and then, when I do, it will be to part no more. Are you not happy, my beloved Frederick? I am so happy—Oh! so happy, I cannot describe all I feel. Heaven's blessings be upon your head, my own well-beloved!—and I need scarcely add that if the sincerest affection which woman's heart may experience, can make man happy, then do you possess that devoted love on the part of your

"Lucy."

The tears rained in torrents down Lonsdale's cheeks as he read this note. The strong man was convulsed with the bitterest agony; and he wept like a child. A child—no! the comparison is ridiculous. No child, even when most poignantly afflicted, ever wept so bitterly as Frederick Lonsdale wept then. O God! how much happiness had been annihilated in a moment. What fearful ravages had foul treachery made! The desolation of a ravaging army in a fertile territory, was as naught in comparison with the desolation which a monstrous iniquity had brought into two fond and faithful hearts. Oh, that the happiness which was breathed in the artless, ingenuous language of the sweet girl's letter, should be thus annihilated in a moment! Oh, that a crown of thorns should be placed on that beauteous head, and that a dagger should be ruthlessly thrust into that innocent bosom! Heaven, why did thy thunders sleep? had'st thou then no lightnings to blast and destroy the satanic authors of that foul and hideous wrong? Oh, it was almost sufficient to make the young man mistrust Providence itself, in the contemplation of this ghastly wreck of bliss that had been suffered to take place!

But we cannot—we dare not linger upon the scene. Our soul is smitten with a deep, deep sadness, as we make this feeble attempt to delineate the workings of the utter agony which took possession of our young hero's mind.

Some one entered and placed food upon the table; he observed not who it was—he would not touch the viands—his brain swam—there was frenzy in it. The meal was left disregarded. Presently the door was again opened; and this time it was to intimate that in a few minutes he must be ready for departure. Ah! this announcement startled him from the horrible vortex of his wretchedness. Oh, to write a line to Lucy and get it conveyed to her! There was some little solace in the thought and he lost not a moment in carrying it into execution. Writing materials were procured; and he covered a page with the impassioned effusions of his bleeding—almost broken heart. He summoned the hostler; and putting into his hand the gold which had dropped from the packet, he besought and conjured him to find some opportunity for delivering secretly to Miss Davis the letter which he likewise gave him. The man knew Lonsdale well, and liked him as much; he was deeply moved too by the spectacle of his boundless grief—and he promised compliance in terms so sincere that the young man felt assured the pledge would not be broken.

Almost immediately after this incident, a covered van drew up to the door of the Royal Oak; and Lonsdale, with the other recruits who had by this time mustered at the public-house, entered the vehicle under the supervision of Serjeant Langley. There were many persons assembled to witness the departure; and many a friendly shake of the hand and kind wish were bestowed upon the hero of our tale. Mr. Bates did not, however, show himself: for after all his horrible perfidy, it was scarcely to be supposed that he would venture to meet the indignant looks of the outraged Lonsdale. Distressing enough was the parting scene betwixt all the other recruits, their relatives and friends: mothers and sisters clung to them frantically ere they ascended the vehicle; and there were few of the young men who did not now bitterly repent the step they had taken, and curse the hour when they suffered themselves to be beguiled by the inflated falsehoods and grandiloquent exaggerations of Mr. Langley.

The vehicle drove away; and while it passed through the village, Lonsdale felt, as each familiar object was left behind, as if he were parting with life itself by a rapid succession of the cruellest blows. The villagers were all assembled at their cottage-doors to witness the departure, and to wave their hands in farewell. One after another the little shops disappeared from the view; Dr. Colvynth's house was passed—then the neat dwelling of the parish-clerk—then the church—and at length naught save the spire was visible from the window of the van. But half-way up the eminence on which the Manor House stood, was the bailiff's cottage; and on this Lonsdale kept his eyes riveted with a mournful earnestness until that also faded from his sight. At last not even the church spire itself was any longer visible; and as he sank back with a deep inward moan—the soul speaking silently in its ineffable anguish—it appeared as if a tremendous gulf

had suddenly opened yawningly between himself and that village which was associated with all the dearest and tenderest memories of his life.

The journey was continued to Coventry, which was at a distance of about thirty miles from Oakleigh—that city being the head-quarters of the recruiting district embracing the midland counties. They reached the barracks at a late hour in the evening; and the recruits were assigned to a room where there were several others who had arrived the same day from different places. On the following morning they were conducted one by one into the presence of the adjutant, whose duty it was to ascertain whether in respect of stature and bodily strength they were fit for the military service. Lonsdale was passed in a very few moments,—his noble height and fine personal appearance at once speaking for his capacity in that respect. He was then examined by the surgeon, whose report was likewise favourable; and these ceremonies being fulfilled, he returned to his quarters in the barracks. A couple of days afterwards the depot of the regiment in which he had enlisted was ordered to repair to Portsmouth; and thus our hero was removed many, many long miles from the village in the neighbourhood of which dwelt the object who was dearest in all the world to him.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE TYRANT FATHER.

A MONTH had elapsed since the departure of the recruits from the village; and in the meantime Lucy Davis recovered a certain degree of mental composure. She was naturally endowed with considerable strength of mind; and for Lonsdale's sake she saw the necessity of bearing up with all her fortitude against the terrible blow which had annihilated all their arrangements and shattered their hopes of immediate happiness. She knew that he had enlisted for seven years. Seven years! was not that an age to a heart that fondly loved? Yes: but love is accompanied by hope; and the confidence that it feels in its strength, naturally inspires a like confidence that its fidelity will be rewarded in the end. Now, therefore, Lucy looked forward to the expiration of those seven years. She was only twenty—she would then be twenty-seven—and that would still be young. Frederick was but two-and-twenty—he would then be under thirty, and likewise still young. Had she not therefore every reason to hope and anticipate that many long years of happiness would await them, when once the period of trial and separation should be passed? Oh! to what straws does the hope of the loving heart cling! at what phantoms does it clutch! in what visions does it cradle itself! But were it not for hope, what would become of poor suffering human nature? and very beautiful indeed is the ancient myth which allegorically left hope remaining at the bottom of Pandora's box, when on opening it, myriads of evils flew forth and fastened themselves upon the world and all that it contained.

The hostler of the Royal Oak had faithfully fulfilled his promise to Frederick Lonsdale, and by entrusting the letter to Martha the first time he met her, had thus ensured its conveyance to the hands of her for whom it was destined. If anything had been required to convince poor Lucy of her Frederick's unchanging and unchangeable affection, this letter would have had the effect. She saw that much of the writing was blotted by the tears which had fallen from Frederick's eyes as he penned it; and in its impassioned language she discovered but too plainly the anguish of heart which he must have experienced at the time. She saw therefore, how truly and tenderly she was beloved; and although she shed bitter tears over that letter, yet when the first frantic paroxysm of mental agony was passed, she derived consolation from the epistle, inasmuch as it served as a proof of Frederick's unalterable love.

A month, we said, had passed; and now that Lonsdale was no more in the village, and Davis observed that his daughter's mind was becoming calmer, he gradually relaxed the stern vigilance which he had exercised over her. Once again was she enabled to ramble out by herself; and she would seek the bank of the purling streamlet where she and her lover had been wont to meet—and she would repair to the old oak in the midst of the wood where the avowal of his love had been first made; and there poor Lucy would linger for hours together, thinking of the past—mournfully reflecting upon the present—and yet at the same time strengthening herself with hopes for the future. But often, when those scenes thus brought vividly back to her mind the many happy hours she had passed there with her lover, a gush of ineffable feeling would well up from the fountains of her heart, and her tears would flow thick and fast, and her bosom would become convulsed with sobs. Nevertheless, she exerted all her fortitude to subdue these outbursts of emotion; and aided by the natural strength of her mind, she gradually acquired that degree of calm which enabled her to elaborate her hopes into plans and projects for the future.

During this interval of a month her father had never once touched upon that topic which, when he first introduced it to her attention, so much shocked her. Let it not, however, be supposed that he had abandoned his views. No—he was, if possible, more completely bent upon them than ever; but with characteristic caution, he waited until he saw that Lucy's mind had regained somewhat of tranquillity and calmness. For the first week or two after Lonsdale's departure, he had been cold, stern, and distant in his manner towards her. Gradually, however, did he assume a kinder mien and a gentler mode of speech—at length adopting even more than his former fondness: for the designing man meant not only to conciliate but also to coax and cajole. Lucy treated him with filial respect; but the pristine warmth of her love towards her parent was chilled in her heart: the mask had been removed from his countenance—and she understood his character. All the youthful freshness of a maiden's confiding love towards her sire was therefore



32 withered: she was obedient and docile in her deportment and speech, but no longer affectionate and endearing in her ways. And as for the sunny sweetness of her smiles—that had fled, as if for ever!

One morning, at the expiration of this interval of a month, Davis was walking through the fields, when he met Gerald Redburn, who was also on foot, accompanied by a couple of favorite dogs. This was precisely such an opportunity as the bailiff sought; and he resolved to make the best of it. With the accustomed touch of his hat, he passed the ordinary compliments of the day for the purpose of engaging his young master in conversation; and Gerald stopped accordingly.

"So I understand, Mr. Redburn," said the bailiff, after the exchange of a few indifferent remarks, "that you are going into the Army?"

"Yes," replied the youth, with a languid affectation of manner: "the governor has lodged the money with Cox and Greenwood, the army-agents, and in a few weeks' time I shall have my commission."

"That will be just about the time you come of age—won't it, sir?" added Davis, who had his own reasons for the inquiry, as the reader is at no loss to understand.

"Yes, precisely so. The governor wanted to celebrate the day with a *fête* for the tenants—a dance, a supper, a roasted ox, and all that sort of thing: but I've managed to persuade him out of it. I don't like such nonsense."

"Quite right, Mr. Redburn—quite right," observed Davis.

"Well, I think I am, and my mother thinks so too. Between you and me, Davis, it would be precious slow work, my having to open a dance on the lawn with some village-lass, smelling of onions, perhaps."

"Oh! certainly, sir; it couldn't be expected. But you don't happen to know, sir, into what regiment you are going?"

"No; that can't be known till I'm gazetted. But this much is sure, that it's to be an infantry regiment, and one that's not likely to be ordered abroad."

"Scarlet uniform, of course," observed the bailiff.

"Oh, yes. I can't bear the blue!"

"Well, Mr. Redburn, you will look uncommonly well in scarlet," said Davis, pretending to survey the sickly youth with an air of admiration. "All the ladies will be dying for you!"

"Think so, Davis?" observed Gerald, with conceited self-complacency. "Well, I rather think I should not disgrace the uniform, at all events. Down, Neptune, down! Deuced hot day—isn't it, Davis?"

"Very, sir. But by the bye, if I remember right, you are fond of cider," said the bailiff; "and I happen to have some very excellent just at present. Will you do me the honour to walk in and take a glass?"

Gerald was about to decline; but recollecting that the bailiff had a very pretty daughter, he accepted the proposal, and accompanied Mr. Davis to the picturesque little cottage. The door stood open so they walked in at once to

the parlour, where Lucy was at the time occupied with her needle: but upon perceiving the visitor, she immediately rose, and with a respectful salutation was about to quit the room.

"Pray do not let me disturb you," said Gerald politely: for he could be the accomplished gentleman enough when he chose.

"No—you needn't leave us, Lucy," immediately added Davis. "On the contrary, you must remain to show our master's son that he is fully welcome here."

Still Lucy hesitated; and something like a flush of indignation flitted across her countenance, as the idea struck her that this visit was not altogether accidental, but that it had been brought about purposely by her father, whose ambitious views in respect to herself she had not forgotten.

"If you retire, Miss Davis," said Gerald, "I shall at once conceive that I am really disturbing you, and in that case shall take my departure."

Lucy had now no alternative but to resume her seat, if she did not wish to appear actually rude. Gerald sat down near her; while the father left the room, as he said, to fetch the cider. The young gentleman had always thought Lucy Davis to be a very pretty girl: but he had seldom spoken to her since his return from Oxford; because she herself, disliking him excessively, had carefully avoided encountering him to the utmost of her power. He had therefore seen but little of her since his return; and he was now struck, on beholding her close, with her extraordinary beauty. He had not before thought that she was so lovely as she at present appeared to him; and for a few moments he gazed upon her with an admiration which he could not conceal. Nor indeed did he attempt to conceal it. She observed that his eyes were thus fixed upon her; and again did that transient flush of indignation pass over her countenance. To escape from the intentness of his regards, she rose from her seat on the pretext of drawing up the window-blind.

"I am certain that I have disturbed you," said Gerald. "And yet you could scarcely be unprepared for any visitor. For your little place is so neat, and pretty, and comfortable-looking, that it does you infinite credit. Ah! there's nothing like a female hand to make things neat. It's a long time since I was inside your door last. I was a boy then; and you were a girl. How time has slipped away! But you seem to go out very little, Miss Davis: for I seldom or ever catch a glimpse of you. However, now that I have once been invited here, I shall sometimes take the liberty of looking in and asking you how you do—that is, during the short time I shall remain at home."

"Are you going to leave, sir?" inquired Lucy, experiencing a sense of relief at the announcement: but she spoke in a cold, almost glacial tone.

"Yes—in a little while. I am going into the Army, you know."

Lucy had heard something of the kind—but she had forgotten it: and now she started as she still remained standing at the window, and with difficulty repressed a sigh; for Gerald



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Redburn's words had touched a painful chord in her heart.

"Yes—I think of going into the Army," he resumed. "It's such precious slow work living down here in the country—although if I had enjoyed the pleasure of your acquaintance more than I have done, perhaps I should not have been either so dull at times or else in such a hurry to leave."

This was intended as a compliment; and the affected youth flung a tender look upon the damsel as he spoke: but his words and his glance only conjured up another indignant blush to her cheeks, and this time Redburn could not but perceive there was anger in her looks.

"I hope I said nothing to offend," he hastened to observe. "I am sure I didn't mean it. Why, you and I, Miss Davis, have known each other from infancy; and when we were little child—*a*—I used to call you *Lucy*, and you called me *Gerald*."

"But we are no longer children, sir," replied the bailiff's daughter, coldly and pointedly. "At all events we have known each other too long for you to take offence at any little compliment I may pay you."

"I detest flatteries, sir—and always mistrust flatterers," rejoined Lucy, proudly glacial.

For a moment Gerald Redburn felt angry, and was half-inclined to start up and leave the house. But he recollected that many of the conquests he had achieved at the University, and also in London, had been preceded by a shyness and coyness similar to what he now perceived on the part of Lucy; and he therefore retained his seat and mastered his rising wrath.

"There are two kinds of flatterers, Miss Davis," he proceeded to observe: "those who do not mean what they say—and those who do. In the former case the objects flattered may not be worthy of the flattery; but in the latter case they are—when it ceases to be flattery and becomes a delicate and well-deserved compliment."

"But such compliments themselves, even if well meant, may be particularly distasteful," replied Lucy, in a manner which showed that she was emphatically alluding to the present case—or at all events in a manner which ought to have convinced Redburn that it was so, were he not too vain and conceited to see anything at all humiliating to himself.

"I wonder that you do not walk out more this beautiful weather," he said, now going upon another tack. "The evenings are quite delightful; and if you would permit me, I should be so happy to escort you for a ramble through the fields. Of course the old people up at the Manor needn't know anything about it—"

"Mr. Redburn, I am surprised at you!" exclaimed Lucy, her cheeks now becoming crimson with indignation: and she moved towards the door.

"By heaven, how touchy you are!" he cried, springing from his seat and catching her by the arm. "I didn't mean to offend you—"

"Unhand me, sir!" cried the damsel proudly—and she threw upon him a look of aversion

and disgust; then, as he fell back astounded, she quitted the room, closing the door behind her.

"What's the matter, Lucy?" inquired her father, whom she encountered in the passage, and who had purposely been a long while in fetching the cider.

"The next time that you bring Mr. Redburn home," was Lucy's firm and indignant response, "I shall insist upon retiring to my own chamber."

"By God! I will show you," muttered Davis, with horrible rage, and speaking through his set teeth, "who is the master here?"—and the look that he fixed upon his daughter was for an instant diabolically savage in its expression.

She paused not to make any reply, but hurried up to her own chamber, where she burst into tears.

Davis re-entered the parlor; and as he placed the bottle and glasses upon the table, he observed with a smile which was intended to assure Gerald that he was not angry, "Lucy has left you, then?"

"Why, to tell you the truth," replied the young gentleman, "she flew into a tiff at something I said—but I am sure I did not mean to offend her."

"I am quite certain you did not," interjected Davis.

"I merely paid her some little compliment."

"To be sure—natural enough between young people. She's a very fine girl, Mr. Redburn—a very handsome girl—and I am naturally proud of her."

"And well you may be," rejoined Gerald, delighted to perceive that the father did not take the daughter's part. "I am sure that it was in a perfectly courteous manner I offered to accompany her for a little walk of an evening."

"It was very kind of you," said Davis; "and she ought to have felt herself honored and flattered. It isn't as if you were strangers to each other; but you have been acquainted from childhood."

"That's just what I told her," observed Gerald, as much astonished as pleased to see how completely the father's views on the subject coincided with his own. "We used to call each other by our Christian names—"

"To be sure. How do you like this cider, sir?"

"It's excellent. But I really hope that your daughter won't think I meant to insult her!"

"Not she, the silly puss! It's only her coyness."

"Well, I will be hanged if I didn't think so. Down, Neptune—quiet, Ponto!"

"You see, Mr. Redburn," continued Davis, drawing his chair nearer, and assuming a grave look, "Lucy has been well brought up. Her mother, you know, sir, was a lady—a perfect lady—a lady by birth, and education, and manners; and so Lucy is not one of your ordinary village-maidens. Though I say it who shouldn't she's as genteel and lady-like as any nobleman's or gentleman's daughter in the whole county."



"So she is, Davis," exclaimed Redburn. "To tell you the truth, I was quite surprised just now at her appearance and manners. You see, for the last few years I have been so little at home I had not taken any particular notice of her: but she has sprung up from the little laughing girl to be quite a beautiful woman—I may really almost say an elegant one."

"You may say so, Mr. Redburn—and without the least exaggeration too. But I will tell you why Lucy might have been rather distant and shy towards you just now. And pray observe, sir, that in giving you these explanations, my only object is to prevent you from going away with the impression of being rudely treated."

"Not I—I know the sex too well. I understand what coyness is. It's always so at first. But what were you going to say, Davis?"

"Allow me to replenish your glass. See how it effervesces! Well, sir, I was about to observe that Lucy has been well brought up; and a more discreet, prudent, virtuous girl doesn't exist. Now, as there's so great a difference between your position and her's, she naturally thought that if you condescended to take particular notice of her, it could only be in the way that young gentlemen of rank, and wealth, and fashion do notice young women of an inferior class; and Lucy is the last in the world to give encouragement under such circumstances. But of course a little harmless, innocent joking and familiarity ought not to be so seriously resented."

"Well, that's my view of it," observed Redburn.

"And now that I have given you those explanations, sir," remarked the wily Davis, "we can change the discourse."

"Not directly: it's a very pleasant topic. 'Pon my soul, I hadn't an idea that Miss Lucy was half so sweet a creature. Do you know, Davis, I think this cider is rather strong, and gets a little up into the head. But, by the bye, I suppose it is not true that there was anything between Miss Lucy and that scoundrel Frederick Lonsdale?"

"All utterly false, sir—a scandalous report. Lucy could not bear the fellow."

"Why, I was told that she came rushing out of the house to rescue him, when he was being carried off by the recruiting sergeant—a deuced good riddance, by the bye."

"An excellent riddance, sir. But as for Lucy committing herself in such a way, I think you must have just now seen enough of her to convince you that she was incapable of it. I will tell you how the report arose. It was my servant-girl Martha who took a fancy to that Lonsdale, and ran out frantic in the way you have heard."

"Well, I am glad to hear this version of the tale—for your sake," added Gerald. "It would indeed be a pity if such a sweet creature was to throw herself away on such an ugly lout as that Lonsdale. He's the uncouthest fellow I ever saw in my life."

"The lowest of the low," replied Davis. "With all his airs he was but a sorry character, and, I am told, constantly in the tap at the Oak."

"Ah, the brute! I thought he was a fellow of that sort," observed Redburn, making a grimace as if seized with nausea.

"A dreadful drunkard too," added Davis; "and such a rake amongst the women."

"That's shocking—for a common fellow," remarked Gerald: "but of course it's allowable with gentlemen of the upper class."

"To be sure, sir—that is to say, with the ordinary kind of women. But there are exceptions—as in the case of my daughter, for instance: because no gentleman would dare think of addressing dishonorable proposals to her. He would not have the bad taste to do it. A gentleman—I mean a true gentleman, like you, for instance, Mr. Redburn—being a superior person himself, knows how to appreciate superiority in females. I am sure that one of your refinement and polish must agree with the truth of what I say."

"Certainly," responded Gerald, delighted with these compliments that were paid him.

"Since we are talking upon so friendly a footing, Mr. Redburn, I do not mind telling you that I have rather high views in respect to my daughter."

"I always had a very friendly feeling for you, Davis," observed the young gentleman, drinking his third glass of cider, which was nearly as strong as champagne; "and so I am glad you treat me in the same spirit."

"I am only too much honored, sir—and flattered also by your presence at my humble abode," responded Davis, with a bow; "and I do hope that now you have once come across my threshold—"

"That's just what I told Miss Lucy ere now," interrupted Gerald,— "that I should take the liberty of dropping in occasionally for a little friendly chat."

"As often as you choose, sir—and the oftener the better. But I was about to observe that I have rather high notions in respect to Lucy—"

"You have a right to look high, Davis. She is a heavenly creature—quite charming. Pardon me for saying so."

"The feelings of a father are flattered, Mr. Redburn. I am glad you agree with me that I ought to look up to the prospect of Lucy marrying a gentleman. Now, tell me candidly, sir: for I value your advice—"

"Go on, Davis:—and the youth caressed his beardless chin complacently."

"Do you think, then, that I am too ambitious—too presumptuous—that I look too high?"

"Not a bit of it. There was an Emperor of Russia who married a peasant-girl, and she occupied the throne worthily. Why the deuce shouldn't a gentleman take and marry your beautiful Lucy, who cannot be called a peasant-girl, but almost a lady."

"My dear Mr. Redburn—excuse the liberty I take in calling you so—"

"No offence, my dear Davis. Proceed."

"I was on the point of observing that your excellent advice and important approval has set the seal of sanction on my resolves. To be sure: Lucy must marry a gentleman. And if

I am not too bold, I should be infinitely obliged if you would take the opportunity of giving her your advice on this subject. Knowing her as you have from childhood, and being my employer's son——"

"Well, all this does seem to constitute a right to tender one's counsel," observed Gerald, into whose head the cider had assuredly got; and all the while he was speaking, he meditated with increasing raptures upon the image of the beautiful maiden. "I shall drop in to-morrow or next day, and have a chat with Miss Lucy."

"Do so," rejoined Davis; "and I will furnish you an opportunity to give her a little of your excellent advice. But when I think of it," he added; suddenly assuming a serious look, "Sir Archibald and her ladyship might not be pleased at your coming to my humble abode."

"Who the deuce cares?" ejaculated Gerald. "But I forgot: *you* might—and of course I wouldn't do anything in the world to injure you. Well, in future, I will come in the evening just about dusk; and so the old people up yonder needn't know anything about it. Lucy is a splendid creature—a splendid creature, indeed; and we mustn't see her throw herself away, Davis."

"I can assure you, Mr. Redburn, that I receive your assurances with the most unfeigned gratitude. It is the father who thanks you, sir:—and the bailiff pretended to be somewhat affected."

"Oh, don't mention it, Davis. Your daughter is charming—and I'm proud to be taken into your confidence in respect to your views."

Gerald now rose from his seat; and on taking his leave, actually shook hands with the bailiff—a circumstance which if any one had prophesied it in his hearing a couple of hours previously would have been repudiated by him with scorn and contempt.

When Gerald Redburn was gone, Mr. Davis, on finding himself once more alone, rubbed his hands gleefully together, muttering, "It is as good as done! He has swallowed the bait! He is already deeply in love with Lucy. How well I managed it! Nothing could be more clever. Step by step I led him on; and he could not possibly see my ulterior motive. Upon my word, Peter Davis, you are an astute fellow:—and as the bailiff thus flatteringly apostrophized himself, he gazed with infinite satisfaction upon his reflection in the mirror."

He then issued forth again to his duties in the fields. When he returned, an hour or two later, to his dinner, he found Lucy looking pale and thoughtful. Thoughtful she had indeed generally been since Lonsdale's departure; but now she was deeply so—almost as much as within the first week or two after their separation. The father knew full well what was passing in her mind: but he was sternly resolved to break her spirit and compel her to fall into his views. He however said nothing till dinner was over; and then, as Lucy was about to quit the room, he desired her to resume her seat.

"You know what I told you some little time back?" he said, abruptly.

"I hope, father, that you are not about to

renew a topic which is alike most disagreeable and improper for my ears. If my poor mother were alive, you would not dare entertain such ideas:—and Lucy began to weep.

"A truce to this nonsense!" cried Davis, sternly. "If your mother were alive, she would assist me in procuring for you the most eligible match: and by heaven! I will not be thwarted. I can tell you that I was nearly mad with rage at the way you treated Gerald Redburn just now."

"Father!" ejaculated Lucy, starting up. *is* it possible that you can address me in these terms?"—and her cheeks were now crimsoned with indignation. "That insolent young man spoke to me in a way which I could not tolerate, and never will put up with; and you, father, instead of resenting the insult which your daughter experienced, now make her own propriety a subject of reproach to her."

"Fool! do understand me!" exclaimed Davis, with concentrated rage in his voice. "If you listened to the dishonorable proposals of any man, were he the proudest noble in the land, I would kill you: but what you have to expect from Gerald Redburn, is an offer of marriage—and beware how you conduct yourself towards him in a way that shall prevent him from making you such a proposal! When a father speaks thus to his daughter, he is only studying her welfare; and again I tell you that if your mother was alive she would approve of my conduct."

"She would *not*, father!—and it is a blasphemy against her name to say that she would!" exclaimed Lucy, with passionate vehemence.

"Well, we will put an end to this conversation," interjected Davis, abruptly. "But first understand me well: for my mind is made up. If you do not give such proper encouragement to Gerald Redburn as a young damsel may, I will render the house unbearable to you; and if my views fail through your cursed stubbornness, I will turn you out of doors—I will discard you—I will throw you off—by the eternal heaven I will!—and what is more, I will bestow my curse upon you, and on my death-bed that curse shall be repeated more witheringly still!"

Having thus spoken, the brutal father left the room abruptly, banging the door with violence behind him; and Lucy sank down in a chair, annihilated as it were by the awful words which had thus been thundered forth against her.

## CHAPTER XL

### THE DEPOT.

THE depot of Frederick Lonsdale's regiment was commanded by a captain—the regiment itself being at Malta, but expected home to England in about three or four months. Captain Courtenay was a gentleman about thirty-two years of age, and was considered to be very handsome. He was tall, finely formed, and certainly possessed a truly military ap-



pearance. He was proud and haughty, and belonging to an "excellent family," as the phrase is, looked down with sovereign contempt on everything and every body which the same canting phraseology denominates "low, common, and vulgar." He was a tyrant alike to non-commissioned officers and soldiers; and the non-commissioned officers, bitterly smarting under his tyranny, avenged themselves upon the unfortunate privates in their turn. The Captain was unmarried, and was a thorough rake. He was dissipated—always in debt, and always poor, because he was frightfully addicted to gambling. About every three years he was wont to send a circular letter to his wealthy relations to inform them that unless they relieved him from his pecuniary embarrassments he should be compelled to "sell out"—or, in other words, to dispose of his commission; so that they had on several occasions complied with his request, but each time with an intimation that it must be the last. His temper, naturally bad, was soured by the constant difficulties into which he plunged himself; and the deeper his embarrassments, the greater became his tyranny towards those under him. Thus by a reactionary process were the effects of this man's vices endured by a number of innocent persons.

There were two lieutenants belonging to the depot. One was about sixty years of age, and having no money, possessed not the slightest chance of promotion. He had nothing but his pay to subsist upon; and yet he never owed a shilling, and always had a guinea in his pocket. It was true that even his best red coat was somewhat the worse for constant brushing, and was white at the seams; true also that he went but little into society, kept no horse, drank only the mess allowance of wine, never invited anybody to dinner, never had any friends in his own room, never went on leave of absence, never indulged in any recreation or enjoyment beyond the regular routine. By these means he was enabled to keep his position, pay his way, and avoid debt. Such was Lieutenant Heathcote. He was a short, stout, ruddy-faced man, with a bald head, and looked somewhat ungainly in his uniform. So far from allowing the sense of his neglected position to sour his temper, whatever he might have felt he devoured in secret; and towards all with whom he came in contact, he was affable, kind, and good-natured. To the utmost of his power he stood as a shield between the soldiers and Captain Courtenay: but as he was only a lieutenant, and so very poor, and without any chance of rising, he was looked upon with a sort of pitying contempt by the Captain, over whom he therefore had but little influence.

The other lieutenant was named Scott, and was a man of about thirty years of age. He acted as adjutant to the depot; and it was therefore with him that the active supervising power rested. He was a person of a very common, but very despicable character—cringing towards his superiors, and a bitter tyrant towards his inferiors. Being almost as poor as Lieutenant Heathcote, and avoiding debt because naturally mean and stingy,—but, on the other hand, fond of pleasure and dissipation—

he spunged upon whomsoever would regale him. Having contrived to make himself particularly agreeable to Captain Courtenay, he drank many a bottle of wine at that gentleman's expense, and was his almost constant companion in his apartment at the barracks. He was a little, thin, dapper-made, active man, with a weak voice, which sounded shrill and penetrating when he gave the word of command on the parade-ground.

There were two ensigns attached to the depot. One was a youth of twenty—the other of about seventeen, and had just got his commission from the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. The ensign of twenty was the Hon. Gustavus Ferdinand Richard Fitzmorris, the son of a nobleman who had a host of children to provide for, and had therefore foisted them all in the usual way upon the public service, sending one into the Navy, another into the Church, a third into the House of Commons (with instructions always to vote with the Ministers), a fourth as attaché to an embassy, a fifth to some Colonial appointment, and the sixth into the Army. This last was the Honorable Gustavus of whom we have spoken. He was a most choice specimen of a drawing-room soldier—a consummate dandy, an impudent coxcomb, an insufferable puppy—deficient in brains, but wonderously well stocked with conceit, and looking upon the private soldiers as so many dogs whom he had a right to kick about just as he thought fit. He was tolerably good-looking, with one of those haughty aquiline countenances which especially characterize the old families of the aristocracy—and he was well made: but these advantages of personal appearance were much marred by his languid drawing-room air, his insufferable conceit, with all the bad points of his character shining through him as it were; so that none but the frivolous and giddy creatures belonging to the same sphere as his own would have noticed his good-looks; for at the first glance his general appearance would have inspired disgust and contempt with all rational persons.

The youth of seventeen who came from Sandhurst College, was a mere boy in personal appearance as well as worldly experience; but he gave himself all the airs of a man. He had fancied that he was a proficient in military evolutions, whereas he scarcely knew the commonest details of drill or the most ordinary movements on the parade-ground. He had a horse, but scarcely dared mount it for fear of being tossed off. He affected to keep pace with those who at the mess drank an extra allowance of wine, but, being unaccustomed to it, was invariably carried helplessly tipsy to bed; he thought it fine to smoke cigars, but having a weak stomach, was constantly heaving against them; he believed it both manly and officer-like to swear, and so he never spoke three words without one of them being an oath; he was always vaunting his successes with women, and was always pretending to have some little affair of gallantry on hand, but he was in reality so timid and bashful, that he scarcely dare look a woman in the face. Such was Mr. Paget, who had obtained his commis-



ston from the Royal Military College at Sandhurst.

We have now glanced at the principal officers of the regiment to which Frederick Lonsdale belonged. The non-commissioned officers require a few words of mention. Mr. Langley fulfilled the duties of acting sergeant-major; and the reader has already seen enough of his character to be fully aware that he had every qualification requisite to form the consummate tyrant. The other sergeant and the corporals were in a fair way to constitute admirable copyists of that individual. The moment they obtained their little power, they became tyrants. Utterly forgetful how they themselves, when privates in the ranks, had smarted under the petty despotism of the non-commissioned officers, they became despots in their turn. Now, for this they were in reality much less to be blamed than at the first glance the reader may think. It was not their natural disposition which made them tyrants, but the system itself to which they belonged. Having been tyrannized over, their best feelings were blunted, the generosity of their hearts was destroyed, and they avenged themselves upon their fellow-creatures for what they had been compelled to endure. This, alas! is human nature. For tyranny is wonderfully prolific in begetting tyrants, even amongst those who are tyrannized over. It is the same in the civil as in the military sphere. The haughty aristocrat tyrannizes over the tradesman, the tradesman in his turn avenges himself by tyrannizing over his foreman, and the foreman, also in his turn, proves a desperate tyrant to the journeymen and workmen generally over whom he is placed.

Lonsdale had been prepared by what he saw of Sergeant Langley, even ere he left Oakleigh, to find that a soldier's life was not a bed of roses; but he had *not* been prepared to find it so completely a bed of thorns as it was. The barrack-room, in which he was lodged, was so wretched and cheerless that he could scarcely wonder when he beheld his fellow-soldiers spending all their leisure hours in the canteen or the public-houses; and as they had but a beggarly three-halfpence a-day—all the rest of their pay being stopped for messing, washing, clothes, and articles to clean their uniforms with—it astonished the young man how they managed to find funds for beer. It was some time before he learnt that the finest-looking and hardiest soldiers amongst them, found favour in the sight of tradesmen's wives and daughters who had more money than morality; and it was hard to blame those poor fellows if they availed themselves of such means and opportunities for adding to their resources. They had been duped and deluded in respect to money-matters from the very first moment of their enlistment. The bounty-money, they were solemnly assured, was three pounds: but they had each received only ten shillings on account. When they asked for the remainder, they were coolly told that the two pounds ten shillings had been stopped for their uniform, equipment, &c. This was fraud the first. With regard to their pay, they had one and all been taught to believe, when enlisting, that they

would receive a shilling a-day; and when this dwindled down, after the stoppages, to a beggarly three-halfpence they naturally felt bitterly indignant at the deception practised upon them. That was fraud the second. To drown their cares they had recourse, in too many instances, to drinking; and it was not likely that they would be over-nice how they obtained the means for gratifying the growing propensity. Then, as for the food provided for the soldiers' mess-tables, they had been led to believe it was alike excellent and plentiful: but they found it the very reverse. It was never of a good description—and often of the worst. The bread, being supplied by contract, was dark brown, coarse, gritty, and to the very taste bearing the unmistakable evidence of abominable adulteration. The very convicts at Portsmouth hulks had better bread, and often held up their nice white loaves in derision at the privates who mounted guard over them: so that those gangs of galley-slaves taunted the honest soldiers of the British Army with being worse fed than themselves! The meat, likewise supplied by contract, was always of the poorest kind, and sometimes actually unfit for human food. Only two meals a-day were allowed—breakfast and dinner—no tea, no supper; and thus the soldiers had to go many long hours without food, unless enabled to purchase it with their own private funds. In respect, therefore, to provender, fraud the third had been perpetrated towards the recruit. But he dared not complain: if he did, he would obtain no redress, and would be certain to find himself a marked man, on the very first available occasion to be entered on the proscribed list, and thus be in constant danger of a court-martial for the most trivial offence. Lonsdale found too that the private soldier had many persons to please: first, the corporal—then the sergeant—then the sergeant-major—then the ensigns—then the lieutenants, the adjutant especially—and then the captain of the depot. Each one too must be pleased after his own fashion, and according to his own caprices and humours: so that it would require the patience of a Job, the resignation of a martyr, the endurance of a saint, the meekness of an angel, and the sagacity of a philosopher, to know how to bend to the weak points of each of those authorities, and avoid coming into collision with his strong ones. As for the roseate hues in which Mr. Sergeant Langley had depicted the soldier's life, had he blackened the picture with the deepest dyes and used a brush dipped in vinegar, he could not possibly have been guilty of exaggeration, misrepresentation, or hyperbolic extravagance.

It must not be supposed from some previous remarks which we have made, that all the soldiers whom Lonsdale found at the depot were constant frequenters of the public-house, habitually dissipated, or pensioners of dissolute women outwardly respectable. No such thing. There were many fine-spirited, noble-hearted, well-principled men, like himself—men whom necessity had forced into the ranks, or who had been deluded thither by the misrepresentations of the recruiting-officers. These soldiers were accustomed to club together some portion of

the pittance which remained to them out of their pay, in order to subscribe to a circulating library and to take in a weekly newspaper. As this was however a democratic journal, they were compelled to be particularly cautious how they suffered it to lie about the barrack-rooms: for if any one of the officers—old Lieutenant Heathcote alone excepted—had happened to catch a glimpse of it, there would have been a furious explosion of anger against the unfortunate men who dared subscribe to it. They took in this particular paper for two reasons. In the first place it was the one which most fearlessly advocated the private soldier's cause, exposed the tyrannies to which he was subjected, and as mercilessly denounced the horrors of the lash as the lash itself fell mercilessly upon the soldier's back. Sometimes a soldier would write a letter explaining particular or general grievances to the editor of that newspaper; and though he gave his real name, and that of the regiment to which he belonged, as a guarantee of good faith on the part of the writer, yet he invariably appended a postscript beseeching that the editor would suppress those names in giving publicity to the document. For a private soldier can scarcely be guilty of a greater crime in the eyes of his officers than that of daring to let out the secrets of military despotism through the medium of the newspaper-press. The martinet of the army tremble at the power of that press; and they use all their endeavors to vilify and cast odium upon any liberal prints which express sympathy towards the private soldier. Captain Courtenay had issued a special order that the newspaper in question should not be admitted into the barracks—a monstrous assumption of power, against which however there was no appeal, and the only remedy for which was to procure the journal in a stealthy manner and circulate it as privately as possible. For the oppressive military code, indirectly, if not directly, seeks to invest the officers with a tyrannical power over the consciences and the minds, as well as the bodies of the soldiery. The grand aim is to make them complete automatons—to regulate their movements, their proceedings, and their conduct, to the rigid standard of an enslaving discipline—and to limit their opinions as much as possible within the circumscribed sphere. It is impossible to conceive any system more calculated to enslave, inbrute, and mechanize the mind, than the British routine of military discipline. If it were competent for human ingenuity to invent a machine for regulating the range of thought, and directing opinions into a particular channel, with a defined boundary which the intellect could not possibly overleap,—such a machine would be greedily caught up by the military autocrats and generally applied throughout the army.

The other reason wherefore the soldiers took in the particular paper alluded to, was on account of its democratic opinions. The tyranny of superiors makes democrats of the inferiors who are tyrannized over. Lonsdale found amongst his comrades many men who had never troubled themselves with political opinions at all, until they entered the ranks—where

the despotism under which they smarted proving suggestive, soon began to make them think that human beings were not created to be enchained body and soul, and that there must be something wrong in the system which reduced one class of men to the condition of trembling slaves in the presence of another class. Thus their minds were speedily forced into that channel of reflection which rendered them easily accessible to the influence of democratic opinions; and in this belief they soon became confirmed by the conversation which they heard around them, and by the articles which they read in the newspaper subscribed for, or which were read to them. For amongst the soldiers there were of course many who could neither read nor write; and of an evening, when the officers were at mess and there was the least danger of interruption, the newspaper was read aloud in the barrack-room for the behoof of those who were unable to read it for themselves.

On joining the depot, Lonsdale, together with the other recruits, was put into the "awkward squad" to undergo the process of drill. The drill-sergeant, no doubt emulating Mr. Langley's example, was harsh, stern, and severe; and he found fault for the slightest indication of that awkwardness or ignorance which it was his special duty to correct or enlighten. Lonsdale did his best to give satisfaction; and being naturally quick and intelligent, he really acquitted himself in a manner which ought to have pleased any conscientious individual. But from the very instant of his enlistment, he had become a marked man; for Sergeant Langley had not failed to hint to the other non-commissioned officers that he was a refractory kind of a fellow who must be kept in check, and that he had an independent spirit which ought to be broken. The drill-sergeant, who was a man of remarkable ugliness, was from the very first predisposed to dislike Lonsdale on account of the manly beauty of his person; and he did not fail to act up to the hints which he had received from Mr. Langley. Therefore when Frederick did not commit faults in the drilling process, the sergeant invented them; and often and often was the young soldier so taunted, abused, and sworn at, without any just reason, that he felt every vein tingling with indignation, and could scarcely restrain himself from rushing out of the rank and inflicting summary chastisement on the petty tyranny of a drill-sergeant. But no; he invariably stifled his feelings,—submitting to every humiliation; for there was *one* image constantly uppermost in his mind—an image whose countenance appeared to be gazing soothingly and sympathisingly upon him, and thus to shed the holy and beneficent influence of love upon his soul.

At the expiration of six weeks the awkward squad was drilled in presence of the adjutant, in order to "pass for arms;" that is to say, their proficiency in the rudiments of the drill-exercise was to be tested to ascertain whether they were fit to commence the exercise of the musket. The adjutant was most difficult to please; and being in a more than usually ill-humor that day, he failed not to vent his spite upon the un-



fortunate recruits. He never once reproached the drill-sergeant for want of tact on his own part, or for having recommended the squad as competent to pass for arms: but all the oburgations and vituperations, intermingled with no small quantity of oaths, were levelled at the recruits themselves—so that some of them were actually bullied into the commission of the very faults for which they were blamed. The squad was pronounced unfit for arms; and this was to a certain extent a degradation—at all events, a deep humiliation—because if the recruits had been reviewed by one exercising a dispassionate calmness, they would have acquitted themselves in quite a different manner.

On the same afternoon on which the squad had been thus turned back, Lonsdale was passing through the barrack-yard in a very mournful mood,—when he encountered Sergeant Langley.

“Well, you fellow, what do you think of a soldier's life now?” demanded this individual: and there was a sardonic grin upon his countenance. “Why don't you answer? I suppose you wish you had never entered the ranks—but you don't like to say so. Come speak up, man: isn't that the case?”

“It is,” replied Frederick, with more of bitterness in his accents than he could control.

“Ah! I always thought you were a discontented, refractory kind of a fellow. I hav'n't forgot what passed between you and me at Oakleigh—how you tried to shirk out of the business when once you had enlisted: but I wasn't such a fool as you thought. Ha! ha! Bates and I managed that affair nice enough. I saw the little notes you wrote to the surgeon and two or three of the tradesmen, begging and imploring them to lend you the smart-money for a few hours: but Bates wasn't such a fool as to send them. A good fellow was that Bates!—he helped to get me several recruits, and you amongst them. But I say, what's become of that girl you were so fond of, and that came throwing her arms round your neck? She was a pretty piece of goods enough: but I dare say that by this time she has provided herself with another lover.”

Lonsdale was moving on in mingled indignation and disgust, when Langley commanded him in an authoritative tone to stop—exclaiming with a terrible imprecation, “What do you mean by walking away like this, when I condescend to speak to you? You should take care how you behave to your betters, you infernal impudent scoundrel, you!”

Frederick could not help flinging upon Langley a look of the liveliest indignation: but he said nothing.

“Now I just tell you what it is,” said the sergeant, with intense malignity in his accents as well as his eyes; “you are a sneaking humbug—a fellow that would do anything mean and shabby; and yet you pretend to have a fine spirit of your own. I have got my eye upon you; and I shall take uncommon good care to punish you for the first piece of impudence you show towards me. I don't think you will know your place till you have had a taste of the cat; and as sure as my name is

Langley, you shall know what it tastes like before you are much older.”

The sergeant then stalked away: and the unfortunate young soldier felt so truly miserable, that if it had not been for the image of Lucy, it is even to be feared that he would have been tempted to put an end to his sorrows by some desperate means.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PROGRESS OF THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME.

It was about a fortnight after the visit of Gerald Redburn to Davis's cottage, that the young gentleman was one evening, soon after dusk, wending his way from the Manor House in the direction of that dwelling. He walked slowly—for he was engaged in thought; and it will perhaps be advisable to make the reader acquainted with his musings.

“I really don't know what has come over me for the last fortnight; but I certainly think that I love that girl. Somehow or another I don't feel towards her as I have towards other women. It's altogether a different sensation. It isn't exactly that I want to possess her for awhile and then throw her off: but it seems as if I should like to have her always for myself—to make her mine entirely, with the certainty that no other person can take her away from me. She is assuredly the most beautiful creature I ever beheld in my life; and every time I see her, she strikes me as being handsomer and handsomer. It requires to know that girl to discover how beautiful she is. And then, too, how I like that spirit on her part! She pretends to be so cold and reserved, and distant,—as if she wanted a great deal of wooing before she could be won. Davis assures me it is mere coyness on her part. I wonder whether he suspects that I am smitten with her? I don't think he does: for he always speaks to me of her with a sort of friendly confidence, just as he might speak to a brother, or an uncle, or any near relation who he knows could not possibly have any matrimonial design in that quarter. Here have I been regularly every evening at the cottage during the last fortnight; and the oftener I go the more I feel the necessity of going. Ah! Davis was quite right when he said that his daughter was not a girl who would listen to any dishonorable proposal. I think I have got impudence enough for almost anything; but I could no more make such a proposal to that girl than I could to a duke's daughter. There is something about her that overawes one; and now I begin to understand what is meant by the natural dignity of a virtuous woman. I always thought until recently that it was something only, to be found in romances, or else in the highest class of society: but Lucy Davis has taught me quite different. She is indeed a superb creature!”

Here Gerald Redburn stopped short as he approached the cottage; and he seemed to be struck with a sudden hesitation whether to proceed.



"But after all," he said to himself, "this is very absurd on my part. I can't possibly marry the girl—and as for obtaining her on any other terms, it's evidently out of the question. I think I had better cut the matter short at once: because it's no use falling head over ears in love only to make one-self miserable. The governor and my mother would be shocked at the idea of my marrying their bailiff's daughter; and altogether it would not do at all. No: I had better cut it at once, and not make a fool of myself any more."

Having thus communed with himself as he stood still gazing upon the cottage through the deepening gloom of the evening, Gerald turned abruptly round in order to retrace his way to the Manor House: but he had not gone many yards when an invincible feeling compelled him to stop short again, and revert his eyes towards the dwelling of her whose beauty had established its empire, although so unwillingly on her side, over his heart.

"Well, this is strange," he said to himself. "I feel that I must go and see her. It's no use fighting against the inclination: it is stronger than one-self. Besides, what if I chose to marry her—who could prevent it? Am I not independent of the governor—or shall be in a few weeks when I come of age? The estates are entailed; and he can't keep me out of them—so that directly I am twenty-one, I should have no difficulty in raising what money I want. Besides, there's the romance of the thing: it would be quite a charming novelty; having a handsome wife with one in one's regiment. The attraction is sure to collect such gay society around one—and then the pride too of a beautiful wife to sit at the head of one's table! If Lucy was dressed in silks and satins, who would know that she was a bailiff's daughter? She has got the manners of a lady; and being so quick and intelligent, would soon fall into the ways of polished society as easy as if she had been all her life accustomed to them. Well, at all events, I must think the matter over; and I will just drop in and pay my usual visit this evening."

Gerald Redburn accordingly proceeded to the cottage; and the door was opened by Martha, who invariably looked vexed and annoyed when he made his appearance. He was at once shown into the little parlor, where Mr. Davis was seated with his brandy-and-water, and where Lucy was as usual engaged in needlework.

During the fortnight which had elapsed, she had endured the visits of the young man for the simple reason of avoiding any more terrific scenes with her father. She must either endure those visits, or suffer those scenes: and between the alternatives, she chose the former for the sake of maintaining peace in the household. Her affections were so firmly and inalienably riveted upon Lonsdale that she could not for an instant feel she was playing any perfidious part towards her absent lover by thus exposing herself to the flatteries and the admiring looks of Gerald Redburn; inasmuch as she gave him not the slightest encouragement—but, on the contrary, as far as she dared in

her sire's presence, and very pointedly when he quitted the room, studied to make the young man aware that his attentions were distasteful. We have, however, seen, that he had set them down to mere shyness on her part; and, therefore, still pertinaciously obtruded himself upon her presence.

Lucy, moreover, endured these scenes because she hoped that the departure of Gerald Redburn from the neighborhood when he obtained his commission, would effectually relieve her from his visits. Her father had not, during the past fortnight, renewed that one topic which Lucy was naturally so anxious to avoid. He was contented by observing that, notwithstanding her coldness, Gerald was every day becoming more inextricably ensnared in the meshes which her charms so involuntarily on her part spread around him; and he considered that it would be quite time enough to adopt coercive measures to compel his daughter to throw off that chilling reserve, when Gerald should be so entangled in the web of love as to have no power left to emancipate himself. The bailiff was also shrewd enough to perceive that this very coldness on his daughter's part, which he had at first feared would serve to damp the young man's passion, was producing the very contrary effect, and was actually piquing it so that Davis was not altogether discontented with Lucy's demeanor, at least for the present. In short, things seemed to be progressing entirely to his satisfaction; and he now only waited for Gerald to speak out plainly and openly, in order to give Lucy to understand that his resolve was sternly taken, and that she must make up her mind to bend to his will.

Gerald Redburn entered the parlor, upon the occasion of which we are now specially speaking, with the off-hand familiarity of one who knew himself to be a thoroughly welcome guest to the master of the house. He shook hands with Davis; but he had not as yet dared to venture so far as to offer his hand to Lucy. He had on two or three occasions made a sort of movement to indicate that if he received the slightest encouragement he would give his hand; but her's had never been extended towards him. A cold and distant salutation was the greeting he ever received from her; for it was not merely that Lucy loved another, but likewise because she could never forget the indignities which Gerald Redburn had heaped upon Frederick, and that it was entirely through him her lover had lost his employment and had been driven to enlistment.

"Well, Mr. Davis—enjoying your glass as usual?" said Gerald, as he took a seat between the father and daughter, but nearer to the latter. "You will permit me to join you?"

"I am really ashamed, Mr. Redburn," answered the bailiff, "that you should always take this common stuff instead of wine. Now you know I have some wine in the house——"

"And you know," rejoined Gerald, with a familiar smile, "that I prefer doing as you do. I am surfeited with wine—quite sick of it, I can assure you."

"Give Mr. Redburn a clean tumbler off the sideboard, Lucy," said the bailiff.

"I would not trouble Miss Davis for the world!" exclaimed Gerald, springing from his chair and procuring a glass for himself. "The gentlemen were made to wait upon the ladies, and not have the ladies to wait upon them."

Lucy took no notice of this wretchedly stale compliment, but continued her needle-work; and with difficulty did she suppress a sigh as she thought how very different her feelings would be if Frederick were seated by her side instead of the insufferable youth who had planted himself there.

"Any news about your commission, Mr. Redburn?" said Davis inquiringly; for he was always apprehensive of hearing that the young man's departure might be precipitated ere his schemes were worked out to complete success.

"No—not yet," was the welcome response—welcome at least to the father, but quite otherwise to the daughter. "From a letter the governor received this morning, I dare say it will be at least a month before I can be gazetted. But, somehow or another, I am not now at all in a hurry to leave home:" and he looked significantly at Lucy, who did not, however, appear to notice that she was thus the object of his regards.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Davis. "I thought that you found a country life very dull after the pleasures of London and Oxford?"

"Yes, horribly dull, until recently," responded Gerald: then, thinking that he was going a little too far and committing himself too much, he turned away from the topic by observing, "So I understand Bates, the hair-dresser, is in difficulties."

"Yes," replied the bailiff, "he can't pay his debts in the village, and there's a terrible outcry against him. The fact is, from what I have heard, he goes too regularly to the public-house of an evening."

"But isn't it said that there are whisperings in the village about his having lent himself to that recruiting-sergeant who was here some weeks ago, and that he helped him to kidnap some of the young villagers?"

"Well, there is a rumor to that effect," replied Davis, feeling rather uneasy at the topic; for he had observed the color on Lucy's cheeks come and go rapidly at an allusion which so forcibly reminded her of him on whom the father well knew her affections were deeply set.

"So Bates, then," resumed Gerald, "has got himself into bad odor with the tradesmen in the village? But at all events, he did one good act: for I understand that he helped somehow or another—but I have never learnt the particulars—in getting Oakleigh rid of that ill-conditioned lout Lonsdale."

"My dear Mr. Redburn, pray suffer me to pass you the spirit-stand," Davis hastened to observe: for at that moment Lucy had started visibly, while her countenance became crimson: then she sped—almost rushed—to the door, and quitted the room.

"Is anything the matter?" demanded Gerald, astounded at this abrupt departure of the young maiden. "I thought," he added, with a look full of annoyance, "that you had positively assured me there was nothing between her and

Fred. Lonsdale—but that it was your servant-girl?"

"I did so—and I informed you correctly, Mr. Redburn," replied the bailiff; then, never in want of a ready excuse, he proceeded to observe, "The fact is, Martha the servant-girl has been with us a long time; and Lucy has taken a sort of liking to her. Martha is terribly cut up at being separated from her lover, and has made Lucy believe that the fellow is a very excellent young man; so Lucy pities her, and would be inclined to take her part in the matter. You know, my dear Mr. Redburn, from your own great experience of the world, that young women will stick to each other in all love-affairs; and therefore I have no doubt Lucy felt annoyed that you should have expressed yourself in such strong terms against Martha's lover."

"Ah! I suppose that was it," observed Gerald. "Well, I am glad you have told me—because I will not touch upon the topic another time in Miss Davis's presence."

"It certainly would be better to avoid it," replied the bailiff.

"I don't think, by the bye," observed Gerald, affecting a careless and somewhat indifferent air, "that this coyness on the part of Miss Lucy wears off at all. She seemed colder to me than ever this evening, and more reserved."

"As I have before explained to you, Mr. Redburn, it is all in consequence of the girl's excellent principles. She is afraid of appearing too forward. But with all her shyness she feels the honor you do us in dropping in to see us. Of course she could not do otherwise."

"Ah! then she does look upon me as a friend?" observed Gerald, experiencing a glow of rapture at the thought that, perhaps after all, Lucy was in love with him, and adopted this very coldness of demeanor in order to conceal it.

"She occasionally speaks of you, Mr. Redburn," returned the wily Davis; "and in very friendly terms too—particularly friendly."

"I am glad to hear it," said the young gentleman; and then for a few minutes he became thoughtful. "She's a very nice girl, Davis," he added, again breaking silence; "and it's no compliment to say that the man is to be envied who will have her for his wife."

"Yes—though her father, I can't possibly help echoing the sentiment. I shall hope to see her married soon. I am sure that if I was to take her for a few months to some fashionable watering-place, she would have her choice of suitors. I intend to ask Sir Archibald in a few days for leave of absence. I never have had a holiday yet; and I am sure your father is too good to refuse me after so many years of faithful service."

"Oh, to be sure!" ejaculated Gerald. "But don't be in a hurry about it—there's plenty of time."

"Yes—but observe, Mr. Redburn, Lucy is now twenty—in the bloom of her beauty: and moreover, I think change of air would do her good—for she has been a little indisposed of late—a trifle paler than she was. But really I



ought to apologize for intruding my domestic affairs upon you."

"Not at all, Davis—very far from it—I like to converse with you on such subjects. It puts me quite on a friendly footing with you. But, as I was observing, I shouldn't be in a hurry, if I was you, to run away yet. Wait a week or two. It's only now the middle of summer; and in another month all the world will be flocking to the sea-side. But is not Miss Lucy going to join us again this evening?"

"I have no doubt, if you wish it," responded Davis. "I will call her:"—and he quitted the room.

Ascending to his daughter's chamber, he tried the door—but found it fastened. Poor Lucy had locked herself in, that she might give free vent to the tears of that anguish which had been excited in her bosom by the brutal allusion Gerald Redburn made to her absent lover. Davis knocked gently at the door—but she did not answer: for all her senses were absorbed in the depth of her affliction—and she heard not the summons. He knocked again, and a little louder this time. The sound, reaching her ears, startled her.

"Who is it?" she said, in a voice clouded with mournfulness.

"It is I—your father, Lucy," he responded in a low whisper. "I desire that you will come down."

"I cannot—I am not well—I am suffering."

"Lucy, I command you to come down."

"Father, indeed I cannot:"—and a convulsive sob reached his ears.

"But you must!—it is my positive desire—my command."

"Father, I cannot—I will not."

The bailiff was about to give vent to some terrible threat: but it struck him that the young gentleman below might hear what was passing—and he contented himself by whispering, "Disobedient girl that you are! I will make you suffer for it."

A sound like the gushing forth of a paroxysm of anguish reached him through the door: but stern and implacable, he paused not to recall his threat—much less to proffer consolation for the effects of his cruel unkindness; and composing his features, he descended to the parlor.

"Lucy was taken unwell," he said to Gerald; "and that was the principal reason of her leaving the room so suddenly. She most respectfully throws herself upon your kindness to excuse her this evening."

"I am truly sorry to hear that she is unwell," returned Gerald; "and I shall not fail to call to-morrow evening, to assure myself that she is better."

He then took his leave; and while retracing his steps to the mansion, he could not help saying to himself, "It is strange—but I am madly in love with that girl!"

It was about ten o'clock when he entered the Manor House, and ascended to the drawing-room where his father and mother, with Aunt Jane, were seated.

"What is it, Gerald, that makes you leave us regularly every evening after coffee?" inquired Lady Redburn.

"No good, I dare say," observed Aunt Jane.

"Evil be to those who evil think," exclaimed Gerald petulantly. "The fact is, I like a little walk in the cool of the evening."

"But you remain out so late," rejoined her ladyship, "and I am sure the dews at this hour cannot be good for you."

"They seem to smell very much of brandy," remarked Aunt Jane, who had caught a whiff of her nephew's breath as he turned round to address her a moment back.

"I hope that you don't go down to Bushell's of an evening?" said the Baronet, looking at his son with mingled suspicion and alarm.

"I should rather think not," he returned snappishly. "What the deuce could put such a thing into your head? I suppose that if I choose to step into the dining-room as I come in, and take a drop of cold spirits-and-water, I am not to be questioned about it just as if I were a child."

"Certainly not, my dear boy," exclaimed Lady Redburn. "You know that Aunt Jane says sharp things now and then; but she doesn't mean any harm."

"Sometimes my sharp things hit home," observed Aunt Jane. "But Gerald hasn't told you yet where he wanders on these beautiful fine dewy evenings."

"Well, if you must know, I smoke my cigar through the fields."

"And you are not afraid of gipsies or robbers?" said Aunt Jane, with something very much like contempt.

The young gentleman did not condescend to take any notice of this observation; and the discourse speedily flowed into another channel.

Another fortnight passed, during which Gerald continued to be a constant evening visitor at Davis's cottage. Lucy, still anxious to avoid as much as possible angering her father,—for there had been a terrible scene between them on the morning after she had quitted the room so abruptly,—endured as heretofore the presence of the young gentleman; and he, becoming if possible more and more madly in love, grew more and more pointed in his remarks. We had almost said that he became more pointed in his attentions: but this would have been to a certain degree inaccurate, inasmuch as Lucy to the extent of her power avoided giving any opportunity of manifesting them. She still looked forward to his departure from the neighborhood as the only means of releasing her from the ordeal through which she was every evening doomed to pass; for as he had hitherto made her no open declaration of love, she secretly hoped that he was too shrewd and worldly-wise to fall into the snare which her father had set for him. But then, on the other hand, wherefore these constant visits? and wherefore, too, that satisfaction which her father experienced when he was there? Could there be a secret understanding between them? Lucy scarcely thought so; for if her father had testified any evidence of his design, would not the young man have recoiled indignantly from being dragged into such a trap? Poor Lucy scarcely knew what to think: but she was very



very unhappy; and there were times when she even seriously thought of abandoning her home. But this is the last step which a virtuous and well-principled young woman ever adopts; and Lucy felt that it could only be taken as an extreme resource, should her position become truly desperate.

Mr. Davis now began to feel somewhat annoyed and apprehensive because Gerald did not bring matters to a crisis. A whole month had elapsed since the first visit paid; and regularly every evening had the visit been renewed. That the youth was deeply, passionately in love, was evident enough: but what restrained him from speaking out? Was it indeed that he was effectually struggling against this passion, and that his pride still rose superior to his love? The keen-sighted Davis had but little difficulty in discovering that such was the case; and as the time was now drawing near when Gerald would come of age and also be gazetted, he resolved to bring matters to a crisis.

Accordingly, one evening—at the expiration of the month of incessant visits—Davis of his own accord gave Lucy some hint to leave the room,—a hint which she was by no means slow in obeying.

"Well, Mr. Redburn," he said, after a few remarks on indifferent subjects, and when they were alone together, "I have made up my mind to take Lucy to the sea-side at once."

"Ah! you have made up your mind?" ejaculated the youth, with a start and a look of annoyance.

"Yes. I purpose to wait upon Sir Archibald to-morrow morning, and beg a three months' holiday. Indeed, I have already hinted to him that I should like it; and he gave me to understand that I need only ask in order to have."

"Well, I was in hopes that you would not be in such a hurry," said Gerald: and then he fidgeted about on his chair. "The truth is, Davis—"

But he stopped short; and a violent struggle took place within him. Though generally of a reckless disposition, and inconsiderate in his conduct, yet the influence of the passion he experienced for Lucy had somewhat sobered him down and rendered him reflective. He therefore saw that things had reached an important crisis; and that if he once committed himself to a pledge and engagement, he could not afterwards retract. What should he do? He thought of his family—and he thought of Lucy: he thought of his pride—and he thought of love: but Lucy's image triumphed over family considerations, and love vanquished pride.

"The fact is, Davis," he said, after a brief pause, "you need not go to the sea-side at all to find a suitable husband for your charming daughter."

The bailiff affected to stare at Gerald in speechless amazement.

"What I say is true enough," continued the young gentleman. "In a word, then, I love your daughter—and I will marry her. It's serious—there's no joking in such things—"

"But, my dear Mr. Redburn," said Davis, still

appearing as if he could scarcely conquer his surprise, "it is impossible!"

"How is it impossible?"

"Your father would never consent."

"I don't want his consent. I know he would not: but what is that to me! I must take care of my own happiness. In two weeks I shall be of age—and then who can prevent me marrying as I like?"

"Much, my dear sir, as I feel flattered and honored by this compliment," said the bailiff, assuming a remonstrative tone, "it is impossible that situated as I am in respect to your honored father—"

"We will talk of all that presently," interrupted Gerald. "At present let me be assured that Lucy will accept me? I can promise you that I am taking no rash step. A week—even a fortnight back, I should have opened my mind to you; but I resolved to reflect. I have reflected and therefore I now speak."

"You have taken me so completely unawares—so suddenly—so abruptly," observed the cunning Davis, "that I really know not how to answer you. If your parents gave their consent, Mr. Redburn, it would be the happiest and proudest moment of my life to see my daughter accompany you to the altar: and I may say this much—that Lucy would prove obedient to her father's wish. But, my dear sir, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that Sir Archibald and Lady Redburn would never give such consent."

"Have I not already told you," exclaimed Gerald, petulantly, "that I do not want it? To a certain extent I am independent of my father. He is purchasing my commission for me—I shall have my fit-out—and he has promised to lodge five hundred pounds at a banker's to my account the moment I join my regiment. That will carry us on for a time, and you know very well that, as the estates are all entailed and can't be left away from me, I can raise money by post-obits, or whatever they are called. As for you, Davis, I believe you have saved money, and therefore are independent of my father,—supposing that he does ride rusty with you on this account. But if I elope with Lucy—what then? He couldn't blame you, and need never know that you were aware of what was going on."

"No, Mr. Redburn," replied Davis: "if this alliance should take place—I say, if it should—it would be my duty to accompany my daughter to the altar and in person bestow her upon you. I would sooner sacrifice my situation in your father's service, than afford scope for the tongues of scandal by secretly counselling an elopement."

"Well, just as you like—I only threw out the hint. But pray give me a decisive answer this evening. Now that the ice is once broken, I cannot remain in uncertainty and suspense."

"And suppose that I yield to your urgent entreaties," resumed the bailiff, "what course do you propose?"

"Just to wait till I have got my commission and the money is paid into the bank in my name; then I can easily procure a fortnight's leave of absence ere joining the regiment,—"

when you could meet me with Lucy at Coventry or Lincoln, or Derby, or any place at a tolerably convenient distance—and there, with a special license, the ceremony could be accomplished.”

Davis appeared to ruminate profoundly for several minutes, during which Gerald gazed upon him with the most unfeigned suspense: for, we repeat, he was indeed madly and passionately in love with Lucy.

“You require an answer at once, Mr. Redburn?” said the bailiff slowly. “It is a serious question—and one for which I was so little prepared——”

“But you are a man of business, as well as a man of the world,” interposed Gerald; “and you can surely make up your mind? I beseech you to do so. If you refuse, common prudence will forbid me from visiting you again: but if you consent, you will send me away so happy. Oh, so happy—you cannot conjecture!”

“My dear sir,” returned the bailiff, “I cannot possibly refuse to yield to your entreaties. I therefore give my consent.”

“Thanks—a thousand thanks!” exclaimed Gerald; and seizing the bailiff’s hand, he pressed it warmly. “May I come to-morrow evening with the assurance of being kindly received by Miss Lucy?”

“Will you take my advice in one thing, Mr. Redburn?” asked Davis, as an idea struck him how to manage the matter with his daughter.

“You have only to express your wishes, and I shall agree to them,” responded Gerald eagerly.

“Lucy, as you are aware, is a girl of very delicate sensibilities and of the highest notions of propriety. She will consider the courtship of a month to be too brief; and she will likewise mistrust the happiness that is in store for her. She will reflect, and naturally—pardon me for saying so—that you are very young, that you have been rather wild, and that like too many young gentlemen, you may perhaps be changeable. It would therefore please me better that you should continue to visit upon the same terms as at present; and that even when taking your departure from the neighborhood, you should make no formal avowal to my daughter. But so soon as ever you please after you have left, you can write her a letter, enclosed in one to myself, and in which you can address her in terms befitting the circumstances. Your letter to me will notify the place, the day, and the hour, where and when we are to meet you—you will have the special license in readiness—and the ceremony can take place. These are my suggestions, my dear Mr. Redburn—and I hope they will prove agreeable to you.”

“I have already said that I will follow your wishes in all things. Be it as you say:”—then with another cordial shake of the hand, Gerald Redburn took his leave of the bailiff.

When he was gone, Davis shut himself up in the parlour and rubbed his hands more gleefully than he had done on the first occasion of the young gentleman’s visit. His countenance glowed with the animation of joy and triumph. He beheld his projects steadily and surely ad-

vancing towards a successful issue; and he congratulated himself upon having taken advantage of circumstances with such admirable tact, and conducted the whole chicanery of his machinations with such a masterly skill. Lucy, on hearing that the young gentleman had taken his departure, returned to the room; and though her father instantaneously composed his countenance into its wonted cold severity of aspect—yet the instant the door opened, she had caught a glimpse of that vanishing animation which he thus chased away from his features. She could not help looking hard at him; and he saw that some suspicion was excited in her mind. He however said nothing, but sat down to table, the supper-tray being brought in.

During the fortnight which now elapsed Gerald continued his evening visits regularly; and Lucy could not help observing that he seemed to place himself on a more familiar footing with her father than heretofore—while towards herself his conduct was marked with as much pointed attention as circumstances allowed him to pay her. She still maintained her cold reserve towards him: but he was now accustomed to it, and felt assured that it was nothing but what her father had represented—namely, a coyness that would wear off. Still she had her misgivings that some secret treachery was at work, and that there was a private understanding between her father and Gerald. She more than once entertained the idea of seeking an opportunity to converse with him privately, and in a few brief but impressive words give him to understand that she had not failed to observe his attentions, but that they were most displeasing to her, as in truth her heart was inalienably devoted to another. But she hesitated to take this step—in the first place, because, as he had made no overt declaration, she in maiden modesty had no right to assume that there was any serious meaning in those attentions; and in the second place, she reflected that he perhaps already knew that her affections were engaged elsewhere, but was indifferent on the point. She therefore held her peace; and thus the days passed on—the evening visits were repeated—until Gerald one night announced joyfully that he was gazetted to a commission in the —th regiment.

It seemed as if Lucy were stricken with a blow; for this was the same identical regiment to which Frederick Lonsdale belonged—and the poor girl could not help instantaneously perceiving that his remorseless enemy would now obtain every possible opportunity of tyrannizing over him. Davis at once comprehended what was passing in his daughter’s mind; and he hastened to make some observation in the hope of diverting Gerald’s attention from her. Lucy, overpowered by her feelings, was compelled to quit the room abruptly; and when she had thus disappeared, the wily bailiff said to the young gentleman, “Now, Mr. Redburn, you can have no doubt as to the state of my daughter’s feelings towards you.”

“Is it possible then,” exclaimed the overjoyed Gerald, forgetting at the moment the coincidence of the regiment to which he was appointed being the same as that in whose ranks Lonsdale



served,—“is it possible that she is so much affected by this somewhat sudden announcement of my immediate departure from the neighborhood?”

“It is so,” responded Davis. “Beneath that apparent reserve on her part, she cherishes a fond affection for you. She knows not that her love will be rendered happy; and it therefore rests with you, my dear sir, how soon she shall be made acquainted with the bliss that awaits her.”

“I leave with my father to-morrow for London, to procure my outfit. The regiment is stationed at Portsmouth—And, by the bye, it happens to be the very same in which that fellow Lonsdale serves!”

“Ah, indeed!” ejaculated Davis, as if now having the circumstance recalled to his memory for the first time.

“Yes—it is so. But never mind him: we have important things to think of. The moment I get quit of the governor in London, I will write to you, as previously agreed. May I not see Lucy again this evening?”

“Do you not think it would be much better that you should suffer her to compose the feelings which have been so suddenly excited? I beseech this forbearance on your part.”

“I am entirely in your hands,” responded Gerald: and then, after some farther conversation, he took his departure from the cottage.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE OAKLEIGH POST-OFFICE.

At the same time that this scene was passing at the bailiff's abode, Sir Archibald Redburn, her ladyship, and Aunt Jane, were seated in the drawing-room at the Manor House, conversing upon the appearance of Gerald's name amongst the notices of the War Office in the *Gazette*. Or rather, the Baronet and his wife were discussing the same, while Miss Redburn was interjecting her acrid remarks after her wonted fashion. The frivolous mother was immensely delighted at the idea that her son was now an officer in his Majesty's service; and she already pictured him to herself in his scarlet coat, his sash, his cap and feather, and with his sword by his side. Sir Archibald likewise experienced all the father's pride: but Aunt Jane threw in something about “a monkey dressed up and seated on an Italian boy's organ.”

In the middle of the discourse a domestic entered the room to announce that Mr. Bates from the village most humbly requested a few minutes' audience of the Baronet. Sir Archibald was first inclined to reply that he could see nobody on business at that hour: but as a thought struck him, he observed, “Ah, Bates! I understand it was he who persuaded that good-for-nothing fellow Frederick Lonsdale to enlist; and he likewise rid us of some of our surplus laborers by the same means. He deserves praise; and so I will grant him an interview.”

“If he had killed the surplus laborers right

off at once,” observed Aunt Jane, “I suppose you would give him a pension.”

Sir Archibald, without taking any notice of this remark, proceeded to another room, where the village barber was immediately introduced to his presence. Mr. Bates was very shabby—or in common parlance, excessively seedy: but he had done his best to brighten up his appearance by an extra application of bear's-grease (his own hog's-lard compound) to his hair and whiskers; and therefore about the head he had a shining oily look. He bowed very low to the great man, and by his deportment testified the most fawning, grovelling servility.

“Well, Bates, what is it?” asked the Baronet, throwing himself into a large easy chair and keeping the barber standing in front of him.

“I beg ten thousand pardons for the intrusion, Sir Archibald,” replied Bates, with another low bow; “but I understand from one of the servants of the Manor, who was down in the village just now, that you are going to London to-morrow, sir: and if I might be so bold, humble an individual as I am, to ask a favour of a great gentleman—baronet—lord of the manor—justice of the peace—and what not——”

“Come, Bates, make haste about it,” observed Sir Archibald, smiling; for he was quite vain enough and quite narrow-minded enough to be flattered by the man's inflated compliments.

“I won't detain you a minute, sir,” returned the barber. “The fact is, Sir Archibald, Mrs. Sugden, who had the post-office down in the village——”

“Of course—I know. She died this morning. And so I suppose you want to have the letter-box left at your shop—eh? Is that it, Bates?”

“I always knew that Sir Archibald Redburn was a gentleman of no ordinary stamp; but this is the first time I have received a proof that he can read people's thoughts. It's quite astonishing. But no wonder, Sir Archibald, that you have such a keen eye in detecting a tramp, a thief, or a poacher.”

“Well, they do say that I am rather sharp in that way,” observed the Baronet, complacently caressing his chin. “And so you want the post-office,—eh?”

“I do, Sir Archibald. You see, it's got wind in the village that I assisted the recruiting-sergeant who was there some weeks back, to get some of the young chaps that went away with him; and they have written to their friends to say that they are not at all happy or comfortable in their regiment, and that Sergeant Langley told them many lies himself and got me to tell a many too to entice them over.”

“Discontented dogs, I dare say,” remarked the Baronet. “There's no satisfying the lower orders: they are always grumbling. Even the prisons and workhouses ain't good enough for them according to their account. And yet look at the county-rates, how they swell up! Look at them, Mr. Bates, I say!”

“Ah, indeed they do, Sir Archibald!” said the barber, turning up his eyes with solemn awe as if he beheld the county-rates upon the ceiling. “Well, sir, as I was saying these discontented dogs as you have so properly deno-



minated them, have made terrible mischief with their friends about me in the village; and there's a dead set against me. The tradesmen had a sort of meeting last night at Bashell's and passed a lot of resolutions, of which I happen to have got a copy. Here they be, sir:"—and Mr. Bates pulled out from his waistcoat-pocket a grimy crumpled piece of paper, which he tendered to the baronet.

"Read them, my good fellow," observed Sir Archibald, majestically waving him off: for the paper was too dirty for his aristocratic fingers to touch—and moreover the barber's breath combined the odors of onions and rum.

"I will, Sir Archibald:" and then in a singing voice, Mr. Bates proceeded to read the following important document:—

"Minutes of a meeting of the tradesmen of the village of Oakleigh, held at the Royal Oak, on Tuesday evening, 3rd of August, 1828, Mr. Siffin in the Chair.

"Moved by Mr. Beagley, seconded by Mr. Mummery, and carried unanimously—That whereas Obadiah Bates has aided and abetted a recruiting-sergeant in enticing away some young men from the said village, this meeting has no longer any confidence in Obadiah Bates as a hairdresser and shaver.

"Moved by Mr. Clegg, seconded by Mr. Po-cock, and carried by only one dissident—That steps be taken to negotiate with some other hairdresser and shaver to come and establish himself in Oakleigh for the benefit of the inhabitants generally and the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King.

"Moved by Mr. Tripes, seconded by Mr. Sheepwash, and carried unanimously—That Messrs. Clegg, Mummery, Brogden, and Judkins, do form themselves into a committee to carry out the above resolution, and that the members of this meeting do subscribe sixpence a-piece to defray the expense of postages, &c., in carrying on the above important negotiation."

"There, Sir Archibald!" ejaculated Bates, when he had read the document, "if that isn't rank treason, sedition, and rebellion, I don't know what is. A secret hole-and-corner meeting—and to lug in the name of our Sovereign Lord the King!"

"I don't know about it being treason or rebellion," observed the Baronet, who could not help laughing; "but it's very clear that there is a dead set, as you call it, against yourself; and I certainly shall take your part."

The little barber's countenance brightened up to a degree of animation that rendered it a suitable match for the oily glossiness of his hair and whiskers; and he bowed so low that no Mussulman's salaam was ever more profound.

"Well, but about this post-office business—what do you want me to do, eh?"

"I have drawn up, sir, a little petition to the Postmaster-General," replied Bates, "setting forth my manifold claims to the vacant situation—that my grandfather, my father, and myself were all born and bred in the village—but he's the document, sir:"—and now from

one of his coat pockets he produced the memorial, carefully wrapped up in a piece of newspaper, and which by its cleanliness formed a remarkable contrast with the dirty scrap containing the resolutions.

"You can leave it," said the Baronet; "and I will undertake to send it to the Postmaster-General with a strong recommendation from myself. Bates, you shall have the post office; it's already as good as in your possession."

"I am sure, Sir Archibald, I shall never be able to repay your goodness. It's a matter of five pound a-year; and then, you see, the people *must* come to the shop where the post-office is—and so they will think twice about spiting me."

"Well, I have given you my word, and you shall have the post-office."

Thus speaking, Sir Archibald Redburn rose from his seat to intimate that the barber might retire. The hint was accordingly taken by Mr. Bates, and he departed, immensely delighted at the result of the interview.

On the following morning Gerald bade farewell to his mother and Aunt Jane,—receiving from the former many earnest entreaties about writing to her every week to say how he got on, and many injunctions against dissipation and late hours; while from the latter he was favored with the recommendation "to be a good child, and not dream yet awhile of aping the airs of a man: because," added Aunt Jane, "there's many a little drummer-boy wears a red-coat but isn't a man for all that."

The same evening the Baronet and his son arrived in London; and on the following morning Sir Archibald, true to his promise to Mr. Bates, despatched the memorial with a note to the Postmaster-General. In the course of a few days Sir Archibald received a very courteous reply, to the effect that his recommendation had been attended to, and that the letter-box at Oakleigh had been duly entrusted to the charge of Mr. Obadiah Bates, perfumer and hairdresser of that village.

Meanwhile Gerald's outfit was progressing. Messrs. Bieknell and Moore, the fashionable army-clothiers at the corner of Bond Street, were put into requisition for the uniforms and all necessary appurtenances: a couple of beautiful horses were purchased for the young gentleman's use—and the sum of five hundred pounds was paid through Sir Archibald's London banker, to a banker at Portsmouth, also for Gerald's express behoof and in his name.

A very proud day was it for Gerald Redburn when he first tried on his uniform; and the baronet was so delighted at his son's appearance, that he much regretted he had not brought Lady Redburn up to London that she might see him in it.

"But no matter," he said, by way of consolation; "you will get leave of absence in a few months, and then you can come home. Your mother will be quite in ecstasies at your appearance; and I really do not think that even Aunt Jane could find anything bitter to say in respect to you. We are going to Lady Catamaran's party this evening, and you shall wear your uniform."

The outfit was complete at the end of a fortnight after their arrival in town; and the day was now at hand when Gerald was to proceed to Portsmouth to join his regiment. One of his father's grooms from the Manor House had been attached to his service, and was sent off to take the horses by easy stages to Portsmouth. When the morning of departure arrived, the baronet embraced his son—gave him such good advice as he thought necessary, or as he was competent to impart—and then saw him enter a post-chaise which had been hired to take the young gentleman to Portsmouth. Having thus seen his son off, Sir Archibald Redburn entered his own carriage and retraced his way to his ancestral home in the midland county where it was situated.

But Gerald did not proceed in the post-chaise many miles from London. At the end of the first stage he pretended to have forgotten some important business, and promptly returned to the metropolis. There he put up at a different hotel from where he and his father had been staying, and hastened to the Horse Guards to solicit a fortnight's additional leave of absence ere joining his regiment, on the plea that his mother had been taken seriously ill, and he had been sent for to return home at once. Permission was at once accorded him; and he was thus master of his time. He now wrote off to Jacob Jones, the groom at Portsmouth, to tell him that he should not be there for a fortnight, but that the man was by no means to mention the circumstance to anybody at Oakleigh if he should happen to write to his friends or acquaintances there. Gerald knew that the groom could be trusted, and was therefore easy upon that score. By the same post he wrote to the Portsmouth banker, desiring him to remit a hundred pounds without delay: for his father had not given him in ready cash very much more than would have sufficed to pay his travelling expenses.

But these were not all the letters that Gerald wrote on that day. He penned a long letter to Lucy, telling her how much he loved her, how necessary she was to his happiness, how deliberately he had reflected upon the step which he was now taking, and how sincerely he would devote himself to ensure her felicity. He concluded by making her an offer of his hand, and referred her to her father for particulars of the arrangements which he informed her had already been made for the celebration of their marriage. Altogether the letter was written in an unexceptionable style, and reflected none of the bad qualities or weak points of the young man's character.

He then wrote the following letter to Mr. Davis:—

“Hatchett's Hotel, Piccadilly.  
August 20th, 1828.

“My dear Sir,

“According to promise, I take the first opportunity of writing to Miss Davis and yourself. The letter to your dear Lucy I enclose unsealed, that you may peruse it ere placing it in her hands. I fervently hope that my suit will prove acceptable to your daughter; and from all that has passed between you and

me, as well as from the evidence of feeling which she testified on the last occasion I was at your house, I entertain no apprehension upon the subject.

“And now, my dear sir, I will proceed to explain the arrangements I propose, and to which I hope and trust you will assent. My father has duly lodged the sum of money of which I spoke to you, in the Portsmouth banker's hands. I have written to that banker for a portion of the money to be sent to me. That remittance I shall receive the day after to-morrow; but in case of any delay, suppose that we calculate *four days* ere it reaches me. On the fourth day hence, therefore, I shall leave London for Coventry: that is to say on the 24th. I had better have the 25th clear for procuring the special license and making the requisite arrangements. If, therefore, you will leave Oakleigh early in the morning of the 26th, you will be at Coventry by midday, where we can meet at the George Hotel; and within the hour then passing your dear Lucy may become my own much-beloved wife.

“A reply by return of post, addressed to Mr. Smith, Hatchett's Hotel, will duly fall into my hands, as I shall give the waiters instructions to that effect.

“Believe me to remain, My dear sir,

“Your's most sincerely, and soon

to be your son-in-law,

“GERALD REDBURN.”

In this epistle to Mr. Davis, Gerald enclosed the letter for Lucy; and the packet, together with the other letters he had written, was at once sent to the post.

\* \* \* \* \*

We must now transport the reader back again to the village of Oakleigh, where we shall find Mr. Bates duly exercising the important functions of postmaster—and perhaps, too, somewhat exceeding the precise limits of his office and authority.

First of all, we should observe that a letter-box had been fixed in his window; and on the strength of his appointment he had painted up his shop. Business being slack in consequence of the “conspiracy” against him, and the coin in his pocket being limited to something like eighteen-pence, Mr. Bates undertook the painting process himself, and a very beautiful daub he made of it. Nevertheless, when completed it delighted his eyes, and that was sufficient. His own name shone resplendent in yellow letters upon a green ground; and the fascia likewise had the sounding titles of “Perfumer and Hairdresser” completely renovated. On a wooden pane specially introduced into the lowest row of glass ones in his window appeared the important announcement of *POST OFFICE*; and as if there were any difficulty in comprehending what purpose the box was to serve, the words “For Letters” were duly scrawled underneath the horizontal slit.

We must now look into Mr. Bates's shop on the morning after Gerald Redburn had posted his letters, and there we shall find the barber



opening the letter-bag which the mail-cart had just brought over from the town of Middleton.

"And so there's a conspiracy against me in the village—eh?" said Bates to himself; "and they are negotiating to get another barber, are they? Well, then, I will have a conspiracy against *them*, for I don't mean to be postmaster for nothing. If I don't find out all their secrets, my name isn't Obadiah Bates. Those who ask the tradesmen at Middleton who supply them with goods, for longer credit—those who have given bills and can't take them up, but want renewals—and those who go writing scandal to their friends in other places, and get scandal written them back in return—shall all be found out. I will get them all into my power, and teach them what it is to offend a man like me."

Bates took the bag with him into his little back room—shut himself in—and began sorting the letters. Those that were for the Manor House he put apart by themselves, with a string tied round them. Next he proceeded very deliberately and carefully to open a letter addressed to Mr. Clegg—then another to Mr. Judkins—then one to Mr. Mummery—and three or four more; and having made himself master of the contents, he sealed them up again in such a manner that it was impossible to discern that their sanctity had been violated.

"Hah! here's a letter for Davis the bailiff!" he said to himself, turning the packet over and over in his hand. "And a good thick letter too—an enclosure in it! What's the post-mark? London—eh! And what a nice handwriting: a gentleman's, evidently! I should like very much to see what this letter contains. Peter Davis sometimes looks precious high and haughty at me. They say he is well to do and warm; but who knows? There's no telling what a man is. Why, there's Mummery: one would think that he had saved money—and yet by the letter I have just read, it's very clear he has not got a ten-pound note in the world to bless himself with—or else he wouldn't write to borrow money of his brother-in-law at Carlisle. But this letter to Davis? Some how or another I feel uncommon curious about it. It's a plain seal, and looks as if it was stamped with the top of a pencil-case; so it's easy to re-seal it with this stamp that I have got. Well, here goes!"

Thus speaking, Mr. Bates very carefully broke the seal of the letter, and was speedily deep in the contents. As he read on, an expression of the utmost surprise gathered upon his countenance, rapidly increasing into positive wonderment—while abrupt and jerking ejaculations escaped him as he continued the perusal.

"Who would have thought it! What a business! Well, I never! This beats everything. The cunning fox! The young fool! Ah, what a mystery!"—and in this manner did the barber give vent to his startled feelings as he read the letter and the enclosure.

Having finished the perusal, he re-sealed the packet with the nicest precaution; and by the time he had done it, the man who was employed to deliver the letters made his appearance to fetch them. When he had taken his de-

parture, Bates sat himself down in his shop to reflect with continued wonderment upon the discovery he had made by the violation of the letter addressed to Mr. Davis the bailiff.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE LETTER.

RETURN we again to Portsmouth, where we shall find Frederick Lonsdale becoming daily more and more disgusted with the life upon which he had entered. At the same time he bore up with fortitude against the sorrows of his lot, as well as against the petty tyrannies to which he was subjected on the part of Sergeant Langley and the non-commissioned officers. He maintained the strictest guard over his conduct; for perceiving that he was a marked man, he resolved to afford no opportunity for the visitation of a direct and positive act of vengeance on Langley's part.

Three months had now elapsed since he had quitted Oakleigh; and during this interval he had received several letters from Lucy. These epistles, which breathed the holiest and purest affection, had proved a source of some consolation to his wounded spirit. We qualify our remark by the word "some," inasmuch as those letters, tender as they were and all that a lover could hope, nevertheless failed to impart a perfect solace, because they most painfully made him reflect upon the happiness he had for the time lost by the failure of the plan that was to have united him without delay to Lucy. The letters were addressed on the outside in the handwriting of Martha, so that there might be no clue at the village post-office to show from whom they really emanated. But on each occasion Lucy enjoined Frederick not to write to her in return for the present, as she had no confidante in the village to whom such letters could be addressed; and if he wrote under cover to Martha, her father might possibly take it into his head to intercept and open the correspondence. Therefore Frederick was debarred from the solace and gratification of pouring forth all the fervor of his love in an epistolary form to his adored Lucy.

We must observe that she carefully forbore in her letters from making the slightest allusion to Gerald Redburn and his constant visits at the cottage. As she felt perfectly resolute in her own mind that these visits should result in nothing so far as she was concerned, she did not choose to increase the manifold sources of her lover's sorrows by making him aware of the persecutions to which she was being subjected, and of the mysterious understanding which evidently subsisted between her father and Gerald. Therefore in consequence of this generous forbearance and delicate consideration on Lucy's part, Frederick remained in complete ignorance of all that was going on at the cottage.

At the barracks, the moment the newspaper arrived, the very first column that was looked at by the soldiers, was the one containing the *Gazette* with the notifications from the War



**Office.** The reader may therefore conjecture the surprise and alarm which suddenly seized upon Frederick Lonsdale, when he one day beheld the appointment of "Gerald Redburn, Esq., to be Ensign by purchase in the —th regiment." The coincidence which thus nominated Sir Archibald's son to the same corps in which Lonsdale was serving, naturally appeared most inauspicious to the young soldier. The following day brought him a letter from Lucy, mentioning the circumstance, and tenderly entreating that he would exert his utmost to avoid giving Mr. Redburn an opportunity (when joining the depot) to vent his malignant spite upon him. Lonsdale vowed in his heart that Lucy's affectionate advice should not be lost; but it was with a deepening despondency he reflected that another enemy would speedily be added to the list of those against whom he had already to maintain himself on his guard with such unvarying constancy.

A fortnight after Gerald Redburn's name appeared in the *Gazette* as an officer in his Majesty's service, Jacob Jones the groom arrived at Portsmouth in charge of the two horses. In him Lonsdale recognized an old acquaintance; and as Jacob was a good-hearted man in his way, though somewhat spoilt by the service in which he had been for so many years, it was with a certain degree of pleasure that Frederick encountered him. He brought the intelligence that his young master would soon join the depot: but in a day or two he informed Lonsdale that Mr. Redburn was not to be expected for another fortnight. Beyond this, Jacob—who was discreet and trustworthy—gave no information. Indeed all he himself knew, or rather suspected, was that his young master had obtained this additional leave of absence unknown to his father; and hence the injunction contained in Gerald's letter to the groom, not to mention the circumstance on writing to his friends at Oakleigh.

Two or three days after Lonsdale had received this information from Jacob Jones—or to be perfectly accurate as to the date, in consequence of what is to follow—it was on the morning of the 24th of August, that Sergeant Langley entered the room where Lonsdale was quartered with several of his comrades, and looked around to assure himself that it was kept in neat and proper order. Lonsdale happened to be alone in that room at the time the sergeant thus made his appearance; and he knew perfectly well that the real object of the visit was to find some fault, if possible.

"Well, what are you doing here, moping all by yourself?" exclaimed the sergeant, fixing his eyes savagely upon the young soldier. "You look altogether the most discontented fellow at the depot."

"I hope, Mr. Langley, that my looks give you no offence," observed Lonsdale, forcing himself to speak civilly and respectfully.

"Yes, but they do though. I hate a sullen miserable aspect: it does harm to my feelings—and the feelings of an acting sergeant-major ought to be respected. I tell you what I like—and that is to see a soldier's countenance as bright as his breast-plate. But, by the bye, do

you ever hear from Oakleigh now?"—and there was a malicious grin upon the sergeant's countenance. "Ah, you don't choose to answer that question, eh? Perhaps you think that the bailiff's pretty daughter is pining, and sighing, and moping away just as you are? But I can tell you, my fine fellow, that it's nothing of the sort."

Frederick started, and gazed with surprise upon Sergeant Langley. Not that he for a moment entertained the slightest suspicion of Lucy's constancy: but he saw that Langley had something peculiar in his thoughts, and of which he was availing himself in the hope of inflicting torture upon Lonsdale's mind.

"Ah! you may well look at me in that manner," resumed the sergeant. "I know what's going on at Oakleigh; but of course I am not the man to let the cat out of the bag. However, I would just give you one piece of advice, Master Lonsdale—and that is, you had better not buoy yourself up with the hope that Miss Lucy means to wait till your seven years have expired. Such a lovely creature as that isn't for a low fellow like you. She was meant for your betters, I can tell you. And so now you know."

With these words Sergeant Langley turned away in his usual pompous staidness, and walked majestically through the long barrack-room. Now it happened that Mr. Langley had caught a cold; and as he was marching on, he was seized with a sudden fit of sneezing—so that he hastened to draw forth his handkerchief from within his double-breasted coat. But in so doing, a letter which he had thrust there, fell upon the floor, altogether unperceived by him. He quitted the room; and Lonsdale remained seated in a thoughtful mood, wondering what could be the sergeant's motive for speaking to him as he had just done.

We repeat that not for an instant did Frederick believe a syllable to the prejudice of the constancy of his beloved: but still he could not help fancying that there must be something going on at Oakleigh which had reached the sergeant's knowledge and led him to speak in that manner. Perchance Mr. Davis himself was endeavoring to bring about a marriage between Lucy and some suitor of his own selection!—perhaps, too, Lucy had as yet remained in ignorance of this design against her happiness!—or perhaps, being aware of it, she had forborne from mentioning it in her letters for fear of augmenting the sorrows of him whom her correspondence was intended to console?

While the young soldier was thus ruminating, his eyes suddenly fell upon the letter which lay upon the floor at a little distance. He proceeded to pick it up, and observed that it was addressed to Mr. Langley. It had come partially open as it fell from the sergeant's coat; and a portion of the writing it contained met Lonsdale's eyes, without any studied intent on his part to violate the sanctity of the letter. The name of *Lucy*, coupled with that of *Gerald Redburn*, caused the young soldier to start with amazement; and at the same instant a sense of some deeply ramified treachery was excited within him. What he now did was natural

enough under the circumstances, and therefore pardonable. Utterly losing sight of the sacred character of a letter which had thus fallen into his possession impelled by one idea only, and obedient to but one impulse—he began to devour with avidity the contents of the document. They ran as follow:—

‘Post Office, Oakleigh.

‘August 21st, 1828.

“Dear Mr. Langley,

“I am very much obliged to you for having thought of me. I received your very welcome letter, and lose no time in replying. I take it as a great mark of friendship that you should have remembered the pleasant evenings I used to pass in your company at the Oak, and the little services I had the pleasure of rendering you in respect to the recruits. The post-office has fallen into my hands; and therefore, you see, I have become an important kind of character in the village. But I am not the man to give myself any airs on that account. At the same time I do feel that I have risen a peg or two in life. I sincerely hope that I shall some day have the pleasure of seeing you again; and if ever you come to Oakleigh on the same business as before, you will know where to find a friend to assist.

“You ask me what news there is at Oakleigh, and whether Davis’s girl frets after that good-for-nothing fellow Lonsdale? I am going to tell you such a piece of business that only came to my knowledge this very morning—but *how*, you will excuse me for not explaining. Would you believe it? Gerald Redburn, who has just got his commission in your own regiment, is going to marry Lucy! It’s all settled! I don’t mean that Sir Archibald has given his consent: for the fact is, he knows nothing about it. It’s all private like; and young Gerald has planned everything with Davis as nice as possible. Ah! that fellow Davis is wide-awake, I can tell you. But as I dare say you will be interested with this little bit of gossip—particularly as Gerald Redburn now belongs to your regiment, and I suppose means to take his wife with him when he joins—I will just give you a little insight into what’s going on. Young Redburn is at this moment in London, waiting for remittances. On the 24th he is to be at Coventry to get the special license and make everything right. Davis and his daughter are to leave Oakleigh early on the 26th, and are to meet Gerald at the George Hotel, Coventry, by mid-day: and then the young couple are to be spliced at once. What do you think of this? An artful dodge, say I. Of course you must keep it all dark, and not mention it to a soul. In fact, it’s one of the deepest and best contrived plots I ever knew in all my life. It beats anything I ever read in a romance.

“So now no more from

“Your obliged and true friend,

“OBADIAH BATES.”

It would be difficult to describe the state of frenzied excitement into which Frederick Lonsdale was lashed up by the astounding revelation contained in this letter. There was a feel-

ing like madness in his brain; and for a few minutes he was utterly incompetent for deliberate reflection. But as the paroxysm of frenzy gradually passed away; he referred to the letter to convince himself that it was not a waking dream of a hideous character which had fastened itself upon his imagination. No—it was but too true; and he could not doubt that Lucy was to be made the victim of a treacherous understanding between her father and Gerald Redburn. What on earth was he to do? Oh, what was he to do? Was he not bound hand and foot by his position as a soldier? Should he ask for prompt leave of absence? No: he recollected that a furlough was never accorded under a certain period of service. Oh! again and again during the few minutes which were now elapsing, did the almost distracted young man ask himself what he should do! There was a fearful hurry in his brain—anguish in his heart—a sense of the acutest agony rending his soul. But still, what was he to do? what was he to do?

This was the morning of the 24th. On the 26th, in the middle of the day, the ceremony was to take place. He had only two days and a few additional hours to reach Coventry, and but half-a-dozen shillings in his pocket. Portsmouth was seventy-two miles from London; and from London the distance to Coventry was ninety. A hundred and sixty-two miles to be accomplished in two days and a few hours! For an instant he shrunk appalled from the apparent hopelessness of such an undertaking; but the next moment he smote his breast violently, ejaculating aloud, “By heaven, I will do it!”

Yes—he would fly to the deliverance of his Lucy! Oh, he felt convinced that she could be no party to the transaction—that she would be swayed by the cruellest coercion and the most pitiless intimidation—and that with no one hand to succor her, the sacrifice would perhaps be consummated! Yes—he would fly to her rescue. But, ah! was it not *desertion*? Perish all considerations, when everything that rendered life tolerable was at stake!

His resolve was thus speedily taken. But how was he to put it into execution? The plain clothes which he had worn when first joining the depot, had been taken from him and put amongst the stores. If he expended the few shillings he possessed in purchasing some such sordid wretched suit as an old-clothes store would furnish for the amount he could thus afford, he would have nothing left to buy bread upon the way—not a shilling to give a carrier for a lift in his cart or van. No: he must set off as he was—he must speed away in his dress-uniform which he had on. At all risks must he escape thus!

For a moment a thought struck him. Would Jacob Jones lend him a suit of clothes—or perhaps some money to purchase one? Yes: there was hope in the idea; and thrusting Bates’s letter into the breast of his coat, he descended from the barrack-room. Issuing forth from the yard, he repaired to the livery-stables where Jacob Jones had put up his young master’s horses. He looked about for the object of his



search—but could not see him: he inquired for him, and learnt that he had gone out with an intimation that he might not be back for two or three hours! Two or three hours! it was impossible to lose so much time. No—every moment was now precious as gold: for he had a journey of one hundred and sixty-two miles before him!

Frederick accordingly tarried no longer. He sped through the town—traversed Portsmouth and Portsea—and emerged upon the London road. Once beyond view of the houses, he quickened his pace, and hurried onward with the sternest resolution of purpose. Presently he was overtaken by a butcher's cart carrying meat out to some of the gentlemen's houses in the suburbs. He made a sign to the boy who drove it to stop, and asked him for a lift as far as he was going.

"You're on leave, 'spose?" said the boy, staring very hard at him.

"Yes," was Lonsdale's unhesitating answer: and this was the first falsehood he had ever told in his life.

"Well, get up," said the lad: "and look sharp!"—then as the vehicle drove rapidly on, he observed, "You see, Mr. Soldier, I was obliged to ask you the question whether you was on leave—furlough, I thinks you call it—cos why, you chaps sometimes deserts, and it might get a fellow into trouble for assisting a red-coat to cut his stick."

Lonsdale said nothing: he had not hardihood enough to give utterance to another falsehood—so he remained silent, suffering the boy to imagine whatever he chose. He however speedily forced himself to converse with an apparent gaiety of tone, so that if the lad for an instant suspected anything wrong, he soon ceased to entertain the idea. The cart conveyed Lonsdale for about four miles; and at that point he alighted as it was going no further. He offered the boy sixpence: but the youth, who was the butcher's own son, said, "No, no—keep your money, Mr. Soldier. I know very well that you chaps ain't over-burthened with it—and as you are going holiday-making it will be of service."

Frederick thanked the lad with fervor, and proceeded on his way: but when out of sight of the cart, he exerted his utmost speed to increase the distance between himself and the garrison-town from which he had just deserted.

## CHAPTER XV.

### COVENTRY.

WE must now return to Oakleigh. It was in the evening of the 25th, after supper at the cottage, and just as Lucy was rising from her seat to retire to her chamber, that her father said to her, "By the bye, Lucy, I forgot to mention that to-morrow morning we are going to Coventry. I have several purchases to make there; and as you are no doubt wanting some new things, you may as well accompany me. I have got the loan of Bushell's chaise-cart to take us as far as Middleton; and then we shall

get the coach for the rest of the journey. Be up rather early, as we shall start at eight o'clock."

Lucy was for the first moment stricken with a vague suspicion of impending evil, as her father began to speak: but he continued in so off-hand a manner, that her misgiving gradually died away—and as she withdrew to her chamber, she thought to herself that, after all, there was nothing so strange and unusual in the proceeding. As a matter of course, Davis had not shown her the letter which Gerald Redburn had specially addressed to her through him, and in which he made her an offer of his hand. The father intended to leave every thing in the shape of explanation until the very last moment, when he calculated that the announcement of what was to take place would come upon her with the violence of a thunder-clap, and so completely overwhelm her with its astounding effects that she would be paralysed into powerless and helpless submission.

But when Lucy was alone in her chamber, she began to reflect upon what had just taken place; and rapidly did her misgivings and suspicious return. Was it possible that all those visits which Gerald Redburn had been wont to pay, were to result in nothing? Had her father deliberately encouraged him to force his attentions upon her, without a hope as to the accomplishment of the ulterior aim which she knew he had entertained? And then, was there not something very much savoring of mystery in this journey to Coventry? Wherefore had she not been told of it until almost the last moment? Yes—assuredly there was enough to excite the suspicions and arouse the misgivings of Lucy Davis.

The longer she reflected, the greater grew her apprehensions. She conjured up all possible kinds of evils, torturing herself with the wildest alarms. Although educated far above her sphere, and naturally intelligent, she was, nevertheless, so far ignorant of the world and inexperienced in the laws of the country, as to be unaware of the amount of power which these laws enabled a father to exercise over his children; and in her terror she naturally magnified this power into a positive despotism. Now, therefore,—as her lover at Portsmouth had done on the preceding day,—she asked herself over and over again, what she was to do? Should she fly from the paternal home? This serious step she hesitated to take. What if, after all, her fears should be groundless, and there was no ulterior meaning in this journey to Coventry? And moreover, would it not be better at least to wait until she had some more positive proof of treacherous intent, ere she threw herself upon the wide world? What positive danger could be in store for her, that she might not discover at least one chance of avoiding it? Yes—she resolved to avoid anything precipitate in her own conduct, and be guided by circumstances. But before she retired to rest, she knelt down and implored heaven's protection, mingling in her prayers the most fervid vows of love and constancy towards him whose name was not forgotten in her pious intercessions.



Comforted and strengthened by this outpouring of her devotions, Lucy retired to rest; and sleep fell upon her eyes. She awoke at an early hour, and heard her father moving in his own room, which was next to her's. She attired herself in her best apparel: but it was with a fluttering heart and trembling hands that she performed the duties of the toilet—for the presentiment of coming evil was gradually yet surely stealing back again to her soul. In case of the worst, she took with her whatsoever amount of money she possessed, and which consisted of ten pounds. She likewise secured about her person some few little trinkets which she had received as mementos from her deceased mother; and as her preparations thus appeared ominous of a separation from her home for a long time—perhaps for ever—she was seized with a sudden paroxysm of grief, and the tears streamed down her cheeks. Somewhat relieved by this outpouring of her soul's affliction, she composed her looks as well as she was able—wiped away the traces of her tears—and descended to the parlor. Her father was already there. Nothing in his aspect, his words, or his manner, indicated a sinister design: so that once more did Lucy begin to recover confidence. She could not however induce herself to swallow a morsel of food; and every now and then she sank into fits of such deep abstraction that when she suddenly started up from them again, she observed her sire surveying her with a scrutinizing look.

"I do not feel well to-day," she at length said, "and would much rather you would excuse my accompanying you."

"The little jaunt will do you good," responded Mr. Davis. "We shall not return home till to-morrow, and therefore you must take a few necessities with you. Be quick, Lucy: for it is time we should start."

The young damsel, perceiving that it was useless to urge any further objection, ascended once again to her chamber, and found Martha there.

"My dear Miss," said the faithful servant-girl, "how unhappy you look! Surely you do not fear that there is something wrong in the sudden journey you are about to take?"

"Martha, my dear girl, I know not what to think," replied Lucy, with a sort of hysterical nervousness. "I am unhappy—very unhappy. It may be all fancy on my part; and heaven grant that it is! But I cannot help entertaining some terrible apprehension. Even now it seems to me as if I were taking a last farewell of my little chamber—and of you also!"

"Do not go, dear Miss—do not go!" said the girl, weeping.

"Lucy, are you ready?" exclaimed the bailiff's voice from the bottom of the stairs.

"In a moment, father," she replied: then having hurried on her bonnet and shawl, she embraced Martha with a stronger presentiment than ever that it was really a farewell she was thus taking.

"Good bye, my dear, dear young mistress," said the good-hearted peasant-girl, who was frightened as well as grieved at Lucy's appearance: for though it was a fine warm autumn

morning, yet the bailiff's daughter shivered as if under the influence of an ice-wind.

Lucy sped down stairs with a little *parce*. of necessities in her hand, and found her father waiting somewhat impatiently. She flung a quick but melancholy look around the little parlor—still feeling as if she were bidding a long adieu to her once happy home: and then she issued forth from the cottage. Her father gave her his arm; and they descended the gentle slope towards the village. Davis spoke more than he had been wont to do for some time past, and likewise with an air of more affectionate cheerfulness; but he had all the conversation to himself, for Lucy said nothing. She did not hear the remarks he made: she knew that he was talking—but the sense of his discourse was lost upon her, so completely absorbed was she in her own reflections.

They approached the Royal Oak, where Mr. Bushell's neat little chaise-cart was in readiness; and Davis said in a hurried whisper to his daughter, "For heaven's sake, Lucy, cheer up! What makes you so dull? One would think that instead of a pleasure jaunt, we were going upon some melancholy mission."

The very words struck prophetic upon Lucy's brain, and she bent a wild look upon her father, as if there were bewilderment mingled with terror in her thoughts.

He hastened to assist her into the vehicle; and placing himself by her side, took the reins from the hostler.

"You won't get your chaise back again till to-morrow, friend Bushell," he observed to the landlord, who was standing near to see them off.

"It's quite at your service, Mr. Davis, for as long as you choose. A pleasant journey to you—and to you also, Miss."

The chaise-cart then drove away, and as it passed through the village, Lucy observed Bates standing upon the threshold of his shop. It might have been fancy, or it might not, but it certainly struck her, as she threw a look of aversion upon him, that the barber's countenance wore at the moment an expression of sardonic malignity—a fiendish diabolical mockery, which struck like an ice-bolt to her heart, leaving behind it the influence of a superstitious terror as if she had just beheld a bird of ill omen. The chaise-cart passed on, the village was cleared, and the travellers were borne rapidly along the road towards Middleton, where they were to take the stage-coach.

Mr. Davis continued to discourse with cheerfulness and kindness, and imperceptibly Lucy's spirits rose somewhat. The excitement of travelling contributed its effect thus to give a healthier tone to her mind, and by the time Middleton was reached, she had almost succeeded in persuading herself that she had been torturing her heart with very foolish and groundless fears. The vehicle was put up at the inn where the coach stopped, two inside places were found vacant in the stage—and father and daughter were now whirling along the high road to Coventry.

The clocks of this ancient place of Lady Godiva renown, were striking twelve as the stage

coach drove up to the door of the booking-office, which happened to be next to the Royal George. Davis and his daughter alighted, and at once entered the hotel. Here the bailiff desired the waiter to conduct them immediately to a private room—a command that was promptly obeyed. But ere the domestic retired, Davis exchanged with him a few words, uttered rapidly aside and in a very low whisper. The fact is, he inquired whether a gentleman named Redburn was in the hotel? and on receiving an answer in the affirmative, he desired the waiter to go with him (Mr. Davis's) compliments, and that he would join Mr. Redburn in ten minutes.

All her suspicions, all her misgivings, came back at once, vividly and with renewed power, to the mind of the unhappy Lucy. This whispering appeared darkly ominous, and her heart sank within her. She threw a frightened and inquiring look upon her father: the glance that met her own, seemed the strongest confirmation of the truth of her apprehensions, for on the bailiff's countenance there was now an expression of a grave and serious meaning, mingled with the stern resolve of a determined man.

"Lucy," he said, "the moment is now arrived for explanations—"

"Ah!" she ejaculated, but in a low and stifling voice; and then sinking upon a seat, she gazed on her sire with mingled wildness and vacancy.

"Daughter," he resumed, addressing her in a firm and implacable voice, "it is your parent who is about to make known to you his intentions, and I warn you to beware how you prove a disobedient child. Listen—prepare yourself to hear something that may startle you, but take care how you shriek out, for I am resolved not to endure any love-sick girlish airs, much less to be moved by them. Within the hour that is passing, you will bestow your hand upon Mr. Gerald Redburn!"

"No, father—never!" responded Lucy, suddenly acquiring a degree of firmness which astonished even herself as she experienced it: and slowly rising from the chair which she had taken, she stood before her father pale and colorless as a marble statue, but with a strange gleaming in the eyes and a strong compression of the lips.

"Lucy," said Mr. Davis, staggered for an instant, but only for an instant, "will you dare your father's curse? Remember what I said to you some weeks ago! My mind is set upon the accomplishment of this grand and brilliant alliance, which I have labored to bring about for you. Do not interrupt me, but listen. Mr. Redburn has offered you his hand. Here is a letter which he sent me two or three days back, with the idea that I should deliver it to you at once. You can read it."

Lucy shook her head—not in an excited manner, but firmly and resolutely; and there was something strange and even terrible in the fortitude with which she was armed at this moment.

"No!" ejaculated Davis: "then you still dare me, you still defy me! We shall see

whether you will do so when I have finished speaking. I shall not fall to your feet, Lucy, and implore you to make your father happy: I shall not trust to prayers and entreaties, nor leave myself entirely at your mercy, because it is but too plain that you have made up your mind to be disobedient. But I will tell you this, that if you in your wilfulness and your obstinacy destroy the proud dream in which I have cradled myself, if with a remorseless hand you dash down the fabric of those hopes which I have labored to build up, the consequences will be terrible indeed? I have made my will, leaving all I possess to a public charity. And why have I taken this precaution? That if you continue to dare me until the end—if you drive me to the catastrophe which will remain as my only alternative—I shall at least die knowing that I have thrown as a beggar upon the world the disobedient girl—the heartless daughter, who drove her father to suicide!"

"Good heavens! speak not thus—oh, speak not thus, I implore you! You will drive me mad!" and now poor Lucy, the whole state of her feelings changing in a moment, clasped her hands and extended them imploringly towards her sire.

"Do not think that I am uttering any idle threat," responded Davis, still cold, stern, and implacable. "If you refuse to receive Gerald Redburn as your husband, I will drive you forth with my bitterest, bitterest curse!"

"O God!" murmured Lucy, with a stifled shriek at the same time passing between her lips.

"Yes—my bitterest curse, laid upon your head with all the crushing, withering power that the awful feelings of my soul can impart to it!—a curse, Lucy, that shall cling to you throughout the remainder of your wretched life—a curse that shall haunt you like a spectre, attend upon you by day, appear in your dreams by night—a curse too that shall embody itself in the grisly shape of that parent whom you will have driven to die in the blood of a distracted suicide. Behold—this weapon is loaded!"

"Merciful God; what will become of me?" exclaimed the wretched Lucy, sinking upon her knees and clasping her hands in bitterest anguish as her father produced a pistol from his pocket.

"You now know all," he continued, slowly returning the weapon (which, we need hardly say, was *not* loaded) to the pocket whence he had taken it; and neither by word nor motion did he bid his daughter rise from the suppliant posture to which she had sunk. "Gerald Redburn is here within these walls. All the requisite arrangements are made; he has the marriage-license—and the clergyman is no doubt in attendance. Will you, or will you not, become his wife? Will you force your countenance to assume at least a look of resignation? will you suffer it to appear that it is with your consent as well as with mine, that this marriage takes place? Or will you fail in all or any one of these details, and ruin everything! If so, deal candidly with me at once. I shall then know whether I have or have not a



daughter. If I have, you will see me happy beyond the power of language to describe: if I have not, then need you only remain here long enough to receive my curse—and at the same instant that your door closes behind you as I drive you from my presence, will the report of this weapon sound your father's death-knell in your ear."

There was something awful beyond the possibility of mere verbal narration, in the looks, the language, and the manner of the unscrupulous man as he thus addressed his almost frenzied daughter. His words came with an overwhelming power upon her, striking her blow upon blow—stunning her in one sense with consternation, so that she remained speechless—but in another sense, exciting the liveliest agencies in her mind. There, as she knelt at his feet—there, as she was in that suppliant posture, her face pale as marble,—she wrung her hands in despair—she longed to give vent to the crucifixion of her anguish in one penetrating, thrilling, rending scream—but she could not: her lips were sealed!

"Now, Lucy," said her father, "your decision—what is it? Speak: there is no time to lose. Mr. Redburn must not be trifled with."

"Father—father—I am half mad!" exclaimed Lucy, starting up to her feet as if suddenly galvanized. "Oh, by the memory of my sainted mother, I beseech you not to accomplish this wickedness! No, no; you will not—you cannot. It is too terrible! Oh, if you talk of suicide, it is I who shall become the distracted suicide!"

"Girl, no more of this!" ejaculated her father fiercely; and catching her by the wrist, he shook her with brutal violence. "By Satan, my will shall be done—or I will do what I have threatened! My word is pledged to Redburn; and if I ever look him in the face again, it shall be in the confidence that my pledge is to be kept."

"Father," said Lucy, with a look so woe-begone, so full of an illimitable despair that it would have moved the heart of almost any other being in the world, "you are murdering me—you are murdering me!"

"Enough! This must end!" exclaimed Davis in a terrible voice: "it has already lasted too long. How is it to be? Say at once. I will be trifled with no longer. Your decision? Quick, quick—your decision? Talk of madness—it is I who am well high driven to it!"

"O God, what am I to do? what will become of me!"—and again did Lucy sink down into the chair, horror-stricken, dismayed, yet frenzied. "Father, if I say yes, it will be my death—and not only my death, but that of another—of him whom I love—to whom my troth is plighted—"

"Allude not to that man!" ejaculated Davis, more fiercely even than before. "You must say yes—you shall, unless you choose to become my murderess! And it will be parricide, Lucy—parricide, I repeat—the unpardonable crime!"

The unfortunate young woman felt as if her senses were abandoning her. Her hands relaxed the clasp in which they had held each

other—her arms dropped down listlessly by her side—and she gazed with a sort of maniac vacancy upon her father. He repeated his question demanding her decision. She heard that he spoke—but understood not the purport of his words. His very form grew indistinct before her—the room seemed whirling round—strange and fantastic shapes appeared to rise up about her—the articles of furniture assumed living forms—and hideous countenances grinned in mockery upon her, that of Bates suddenly appearing in the midst with the same expression of malignant meaning that he had worn when she passed his shop in the morning. Again did her father address her. He advanced close up to her—he took her hand—he pressed it—she knew not what he said—she had lost the memory of the preceding scene—she neither beheld nor understood any thing with distinctness: she was in a dream, though wide awake. A third time did he speak to her while she was in this condition—and she thought that he required some answer: but without knowing to what she was answering, she mechanically murmured, "Yes."

"Then may heaven bless you, dearest Lucy!" were the words which now all in a moment plainly and intelligibly smote upon her ears.

Her waking dream vanished—she understood her position in all its frightful reality—and she stretched out her hand to hold her father back as he rushed away from her.

The next instant he had quitted the apartment—and she found herself alone. It was in the enthusiasm of joy and triumph that he had thus sped away to see Gerald Redburn.

As a sudden glare of light thrown into a dark room brings forth every object into vivid relief, so did an instantaneous clearness arise in Lucy's mind—and every thought and idea harbored there, was in a moment redeemed from confusion and bewilderment. She comprehended what she had done—that she had spoken the fatal yes—and that her father had gone to signify her assent to the loathed and detested object who sought her as his bride. Oh! had she then for a single instant—and even in the unconsciousness of that moment—proved faithless to her plighted love to Frederick Lonsdale? There was anguish in the thought; and every other consideration vanishing from her mind, she rushed from the room.

She had not taken off her bonnet and shawl on first entering; and thus there was naught to delay her. Down the stairs she precipitated herself—dashed past an astonished waiter who was ascending at the time—and flitted forth from the hotel. Along the street she hurried, reckless of the attention which her excited manner and precipitate speed naturally drew upon her; and in a few minutes she gained a more secluded part of the town. There she slackened her pace to recover breath. All of a sudden an ejaculation of joy fell on her ears; and at the instant she raised her eyes in recognition of that well-known voice, she was clasped in the arms of Frederick Lonsdale!



## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE FUGITIVES.

A QUARTER OF AN hour after this meeting, the lovers might have been observed wending their way through some fields in the vicinage of Coventry, and speeding towards a grove, where they could screen themselves from pursuit and enter into those mutual explanations which were so much longed for. Hand in hand did they press onward, exchanging but a few words, and these of love and tenderness—but bending upon each other looks that spoke the feelings of their hearts ten thousand times more eloquently than even the few words thus spoken.

The reader will perhaps be surprised to learn that Lonsdale appeared most respectably attired in a good suit of clothes—not of fustian nor of working-class materials, but of broad cloth; and although his looks were wretchedly haggard and careworn, and he was evidently suffering from the effects of immense physical fatigue and mental anxiety, he nevertheless had an air of superiority above his condition amounting almost to gentility, which even in the hurry and excitement of her thoughts Lucy could not help noticing.

In a few minutes they reached the grove: they plunged into its shade—they sought its depths; and there, upon the huge trunk of a tree which had been cut down, did they seat themselves side by side—and again did they indulge in a fond embrace. But now for the first time since she had fled so precipitately from the hotel, did a horrible thought recur with frightful vividness to the young damsel's mind. That threat which her father had uttered—a threat which he had indeed made so deliberately, and with such stern solemnity,—the threat of self-destruction! Frederick perceived that a species of mortal terror suddenly fastened itself upon his well-beloved: she grew pale as death, and was sinking back as if about to faint, had he not sustained her in his arms. The excited eagerness with which he besought her to tell him what ailed her, recalled her to herself; and in a few rapid but explicit words she gave him to understand what her father had threatened, and the reminiscence of which had so suddenly smit her with a feeling like that of death. But Frederick hastened to reassure her.

"I think, my beloved Lucy," he replied, "that I understand your father's character much better than you do. Believe me,—and in so solemn and grave a matter I would not buoy you up with a hope in the truthfulness of which I experienced no confidence,—but believe me, I say, when I assure you that he is the last man in existence to carry such a threat into execution. No, dearest Lucy,—it is not the cold, calculating, worldly-minded man of his nature that voluntarily puts a period to his life for such a disappointment as this. His first impulse on discovering your flight, will have been to search for you; and in the excitement of the proceeding he will forget his threat. Besides, do you not see, Lucy, that it was but one of the

terribly coercive means that he adopted to render you pliant and yielding?"

Miss Davis felt her confidence revive as her lover thus spoke; and when she looked calmly at that terrible scene which had ere now taken place with her father, she felt assured that Frederick must be right. She now entered into the fullest explanations, telling him all that had occurred in respect to Gerald Redburn during their separation, and wherefore she had suppressed in her letters all allusion to the subject. She likewise explained how she had been beguiled into this journey to Coventry—how she had entertained her misgivings—and how they were for the moment strengthened by the sinister aspect of Bates standing upon the threshold of his shop; but how at the same time she was unacquainted with any particulars to enable her to associate that individual with her sire's treacherous proceedings. She described the fearful scene which had taken place between her father and herself,—frankly admitting that in a moment of the soul's consternation, stupor, and bewilderment, she had breathed the word *yes*,—but adding, with endearing looks thrown upon her lover, that the instant she became mistress of her thoughts and actions once more, she had allowed but one idea to sway her—and that was the troth she had plighted to him.

Often during Lucy's recital, did Frederick express by his looks and his caresses the feelings that the several points of her narrative excited within him. Those looks and those caresses indicated all the gratitude he felt for her delicate forbearance in suppressing every allusion in her letters to Gerald Redburn—all the admiration he experienced for her devoted constancy—all the sympathy that swelled in his heart for her sufferings and persecutions—and all the indignation that inspired him at the treacherous intents to which she was to have been made the victim.

He then entered upon his own narrative—telling her how the discovery of Bates's letter to Sergeant Langley had made him acquainted with the whole plot. Lucy now indeed comprehended why it was that the barber had worn so sardonic a look as he stood upon his threshold: but her thoughts were speedily diverted, and most painfully so, into another channel, when Frederick proceeded in melancholy candor to reveal to her that he was not absent from his regiment with leave, but that he was a *deserter*! Fortunately for the poor girl she knew not the dread consequences to which he had rendered himself liable: yet at the same time she was sufficiently acquainted with the subject to perceive that he had taken a most serious step, and one which would draw down upon him at least some punishment. But all her interest was quickly absorbed in the narrative which Frederick gave of the fatigues and the privations he had suffered during his immense journey of one hundred and sixty-two miles, accomplished in exactly fifty hours. The greater portion of his journey he had performed on foot,—until at last he had been compelled through fear of not reaching Coventry in time, to give all the money he had in his pocket for

a ride on the top of a stage-coach so far as the coachman would take him for that amount.

"This morning at nine o'clock," he continued, "on alighting from the coach, I still found myself many, many miles from Coventry, without a penny in my pocket—almost starving with hunger—and racked by the terrible apprehension that it would be impossible for me to reach my destination in time to save you. At that hour, as I was approaching a village—dragging myself painfully along—my ears suddenly caught the sounds of wheels and horses' hoofs dashing along the road with a celerity that at once convinced me something was amiss. Then I heard the screams of female voices; and almost immediately afterwards an open chaise, containing a gentleman and two ladies, and drawn by two high-spirited horses, came rushing along behind me. At a glance I perceived that the horses were running away; the gentleman had dropped the reins, and the vehicle was swaying from side to side in a manner which threatened it with an immediate upset. Besides which, there were several heaps of stones along the side of the road; and the chaise was whirled by the maddened horses over them one after another in rapid succession. I sprang forward—caught the rein—and although dragged along for upwards of a minute, I must confess, Lucy, to the imminent danger of my life—I succeeded in stopping the animals. The thanks which I received from the gentleman and two ladies, were of the most servile kind: indeed I had saved their lives. The gentleman made me a present of ten guineas; and bidding me farewell, pursued his way. You may conceive the joy which I experienced! Did it not look as if heaven itself had thrown me in the way of this adventure, that I might obtain the means of prosecuting my journey? And, Oh! it was an unspeakable relief to be able to put off my uniform, and purchase a suit of plain clothes. It appeared to me as if there were safety and security in the change; and I selected a suit of this kind—the better to disguise myself—for no one would think of looking for a deserter in such a garb. I walked on with hope in my heart; and presently I obtained a ride in a tradesman's cart that was proceeding for several miles in the same direction as myself. Then there was another long walk—and then a coach overtaking me, conveyed me into Coventry; and I alighted in the very street where a few moments afterwards, to my surprise and joy, I happily encountered you."

Having given mutual explanations, the lovers lost no time in discussing the plans which were naturally suggested by the circumstances of their position. Lonsdale entertained not the slightest idea of returning to his regiment. He had suffered too much, even apart from other considerations, to return voluntarily to that earthly pandemonium whence he had escaped. Besides, he knew full well, although he breathed not a hint thereof to Lucy, that if he did return, it would be with the certainty of undergoing the frightful lacerations of the cat-o-nine-tails. His idea was that they should repair with the least possible delay to some remote place, and

there fix their abode for a few weeks, while the banns of marriage were put up in the local church; then, after their union, that they should repair to some other place, where under a feigned name they might settle down in the hope that he would effectually baffle any search that might be instituted after him as a deserter, and where by his honest industry a livelihood might be obtained. Lucy coincided with her lover's views. What objection had she to offer? He spoke of their immediate marriage with so much delicacy and tenderness, that she loved him more devotedly if possible than ever; and with blushes on her cheeks, but happiness in her eyes, she signified her assent.

When their little plans were settled, they examined their stock of money, and found that they had exactly sixteen pounds in their possession;—namely, the ten which Lucy had so fortunately brought with her, and six remaining out of the sum presented by the gentleman to Lonsdale. It was not much to begin the world with, particularly as all their personal property in respect to wearing apparel consisted of the things they had on them at the time; but they were determined upon practising all requisite frugality and economy—and they had hope in their hearts, as well as an abundance of love; and therefore they considered their prospects to be sufficiently cheering.

Having rested and conversed for nearly an hour in the grove, they continued their way across the fields,—not exactly knowing in which direction they were proceeding, but resolved to wander on until they reached some main road, where they meant to take the first public conveyance bound for any place sufficiently distant to answer their purposes. In another hour their design was so far carried out that they found themselves seated together on the outside of a coach proceeding to York; and as the vehicle sped farther and farther on, their spirits rose in proportion to the distance which was thus increasing between themselves and the midland counties.

On arriving at York, they immediately hired two distinct lodgings, and at once took the requisite steps for having the banns of marriage put up in the parish where they had thus taken up their quarters. In a few days any latent misgiving which Lucy might have experienced in respect to her father, was completely dissipated by the appearance of the following advertisement in a London newspaper, which happened to meet Frederick's eye, and which he lost no time in showing to his well-beloved:—

"L. D. of Oakleigh,—You are earnestly entreated to return home to your father, who is distracted at your flight. He faithfully promises that his intentions on a certain matter shall not be persevered in. All is ended and broken off in that respect."

Lucy's mind was now completely set at rest with regard to her father's safety: but not for a moment did she entertain the thought of complying with the above requisition. Much as she deplored the painful necessity which had compelled her to fly from the paternal com-



rol, she could not without abandoning Lonsdale return to her father. Such a sacrifice she would not make. Though still experiencing a filial regard for her sire, she could no longer love him with the same pure and confiding affection as she had been wont to experience: his treatment had been too harsh—his tyranny too unrelenting—and his own character had been developed in colors too dark, not to shock the ingenuous feelings of his daughter, and enable her to discover in her own conscience a complete justification for the course which she was pursuing. At the same time she longed to make him aware that she was incapable of adopting a wrong path, and that if she renounced her home for ever, it must not thence be inferred that she was likely to disgrace the name that she had borne. Frederick, when her wishes were made known to him, suggested that if she would write a letter to her father, he would give it to the guard of one of the York and London coaches, with strict injunctions to put it into the post-office in the metropolis. Lucy accordingly penned the following lines:—

“My dear father,

“For in such terms must I address you, inasmuch as notwithstanding everything that has occurred, I cannot forget that until recently your treatment of me was always such as to demand my devoted love. I have seen your advertisement in the newspapers: but it is impossible that I can obey your wishes. Things have gone too far to permit the hope that we could ever again live happily beneath the same roof. Rest assured that your daughter will never forget the excellent advice which her deceased and lamented mother was wont to instil into her mind. No, father—on this head you need not entertain the slightest apprehension; but you may trust in this assurance, even if you do not know my character sufficiently to be full well aware that I am incapable of doing anything wrong. From time to time, if opportunities should arrive, you may expect to hear from me; and I cherish the hope that I shall be enabled hereafter to suggest some means by which you may communicate with me, if such be your desire. But it is not probable that I shall confide to you the place of my abode; and this I mention not in any spirit of defiance—because of *that* I am incapable—but that you may spare yourself the excitement, the suspense, and the cost of unavailing researches to discover me. You know, father, that I am not to blame for having fled from you: it was my only alternative—the last resource to which your own conduct drove me. But do not think that I cherish any animosity against you. Such a feeling is incompatible with the filial love I have ever borne you. Therefore, when I beseech heaven to forgive me, as I forgive you, for your cruelty towards me—and when I add that I am doing my best to efface the sense of it from my mind—it is in all sincerity I give you these assurances. Yes: that God may bless you, my dear father, is indeed the prayer of your daughter,

“L. D.”

This letter, being duly sealed and addressed, was given by Lonsdale to the guard of one of the coaches; and a fee of five shillings elicited a ready promise that the instructions which accompanied it should be punctually obeyed. Lucy, thinking that her father might possibly address her again through the medium of the newspapers, begged her lover to keep his eye upon them; and in about a week another advertisement appeared, to the following effect:—

“L. D.—I have received your letter bearing the London post-mark. Again and again do I beseech you to return. The intelligence has reached me that a certain person, F. L., has deserted from his regiment. I implore you by everything sacred not to unite yourself to that man. You do not know his real character. Besides, are you aware that at any moment he may be snatched away from you and subjected to an infamous punishment?

“Your distracted father,  
“P. D.”

For a moment did Frederick Lonsdale hesitate to show this advertisement to Lucy. Not that he feared any evil effect from the base insinuation regarding his own character, because he knew that his well-beloved would put the proper construction thereon: but it was on account of the revelation which would be made to her respecting the penalty affixed to the crime of desertion, that he thus hesitated. Candor was however one of the leading characteristics of the young man; and he therefore promptly made up his mind to show her the advertisement. He did so,—at the same time gently and delicately making her aware of the nature of the punishment to which her father alluded. At first Lucy was dreadfully shocked, and became convulsed with grief; but the assurances which Frederick gave her, to the effect that their precautions were so well taken and their future plans were so well laid as to render his capture the most distant of chances, succeeded in consoling the young damsel. As for this second entreaty on the part of her father, she remained unmoved,—her resolution being firmly taken to sacrifice all the world rather than abandon her lover.

The bans having been duly asked on three consecutive Sundays, the marriage was celebrated with as much privacy and simplicity as possible; and Lucy Davis became the bride of him whom she loved so tenderly and devotedly. Forgotten now were all past sufferings and afflictions; and the young pair experienced a sense of happiness which absorbed every apprehension of future sorrows. The day after their union they proceeded to Carlisle, where they resolved to settle down. They had no particular object in choosing this place, beyond the circumstance of its extreme remoteness from that midland county in which Mr. Davis dwelt, and of its still greater distance from Portsmouth, where the depot of Lonsdale's regiment was stationed. The reader has already seen that their little plans were prudentially sketched out beforehand, and that they did not abandon themselves to chance circumstances.



more than in their peculiar position they could help. On arriving at Carlisle, they found their stock of money diminished to about eight pounds,—their travelling-expenses, their three weeks' living at York, the marriage-fees, and the purchase of necessary articles of clothing, having absorbed the difference: but their expenditure had been characterized by the most rigid economy. They hired a couple of furnished rooms in a respectable house, but at a cheap rent—and lost no time in carrying into execution the plans already laid down.

Adopting the fictitious name of Mortimer, Frederick had little circulars printed, to the effect that he sought to establish a school for boys of a tender age, whom he undertook to instruct in the rudiments of a plain education; while other circulars announced that Lucy would execute needlework, either plain or fancy, on very reasonable terms. The landlady of the house was a respectable kind-hearted woman; and from the very first moment of her new lodgers' arrival, she experienced an interest in them. She cheerfully undertook, therefore, to forward their views. Fortune—for the present, at all events—seemed weary of persecuting the affectionate young couple; and Lucy's circulars, aided by the strong recommendations of Mrs. Harrison, the good widow, speedily produced the desired results. Work came in rapidly; and as she executed it with neatness, taste, and punctuality, she gained the favor of those who patronised her. Three or four day-scholars were likewise obtained for Frederick; and the parents of these children were so much pleased with his address and his unassuming manners, that they promised to extend their recommendations to the utmost of their power. The families from whom Lucy received work likewise experienced an interest in the young wife, whose personal beauty was so great, whose manners were so agreeable, and whose looks were so modest; and thus the newly-married couple met with a success even exceeding their own most sanguine expectations.

Weeks passed away and grew into months, and Lucy had more work than she could possibly do; for Frederick, while he beheld with admiration and gratitude her great industry, would not permit her to toil to a degree that should injure her health, especially as he himself had increased his school to some fifteen or sixteen scholars. They earned more than was requisite to meet their expenditure, and were enabled every week to accumulate some little savings. Thus time passed on; and everything progressed favorably with the young couple.

They were, indeed, as happy as could possibly be expected. One circumstance only at times brought a chill upon their spirits; and when they observed the slightest despondency on each other's part they knew full well what it was that produced it. But then they would throw their arms round each other's necks, and in the fond fervor of that pure and holy embrace, experience in the very circumstance of their devoted love a renewed sense of security. Need we say that the fear which thus from time to time visited them, was lest the present

even-flowing tide of happiness was too favorable to last, and that they should prepare themselves for any accident which might lead to the recognition and arrest of Frederick! But, as time wore on, the intervals between these fits of despondency grew longer and longer; and having faith in heaven, and hope and trust in a supernal Providence, they could scarcely think that the bliss they now enjoyed could be cruelly scattered to the winds.

It was a pleasing spectacle to see Frederick, surrounded by his little pupils—patiently, kindly, and with pains-taking care instructing their minds and enlarging their intellectual capacities; while Lucy, seated by the fire—for it was now winter—occupied herself with her work. From time to time she would raise her eyes off that work; and, as if by a species of magnetic intuition, Frederick would at the same moment lift his regards from his book—and when those glances met, it was in the transfusion and unison of ineffable feelings of love and devotion. On a Sunday they might be seen repairing to the parish church arm-in-arm, both dressed with taste and neatness, yet in an unassuming manner, receiving the kindest salutations from all the neighbors, and being pointed out as a veritable pattern for married couples.

Thus did time pass away. The Spring arrived with its verdure and its flowers—Summer came with its sunny glories—and when the Autumn fruits were gathered from the trees, Lucy became the mother of a boy, whose presence was hailed with rapture by the overjoyed and delighted parents.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### CHRISTMAS EVE.

A VIRTUOUS woman is the very embodiment and personification of love. The true beginning and end of all that is pure and worthy of woman-kind, is love. Love may be made to constitute all woman's happiness; but if the heavenly passion be perverted, it proves the source of all her sorrows. Very beautiful, indeed, is the principle of love in woman: it constitutes a roseate atmosphere "in which she lives, and moves, and has her being"—and it forms a halo of celestial purity to surround her. Its light shines in the glance of her eyes—beams in the smile upon her lips—and makes the music of her softest tones; for the melody of woman's voice is but a prolonged echo of the spirit of love. It is impossible to think of the beneficent yet unobtrusive influence of a virtuous woman without experiencing a sense of the most exalted admiration. Behold her as the obedient daughter—how much she will endure, through what trials she will pass, and how gonding must become the parental tyranny ere she will allow her spirit to rebel against the authors of her being! Behold her when loving some object worthy of her devotion—mark her unvarying constancy—the resolution uniting with tenderness in the nature of her affection—the tenacity with which she clings

to him whom she knows to be deserving of her love. Again, behold her as the wife joyously welcoming her husband home—feeding her spirit with the memory of his looks and smiles when he is absent—and with all the sublimest elements of an ever-enduring constancy and faith appealing to his soul. And lastly, contemplate her as the mother, pressing her newborn babe to her bosom—studying to trace in its little countenance the lineaments of its sire—and fondly making imagination continue the work in this respect beyond the point where verisimilitude has stopped. Yes—woman, when imbued with a pure and virtuous love, is an angel-creature: and well may poets strike their lyres to sing her praise—well might the warriors of old have dared deeds of high emprise for the meed of her smile—well may the student trim his lamp to write essays upon her manifold good qualities! All these tributes and all this homage does she deserve. Last at the cross and earliest at the grave of the Saviour, she teaches to the sincere Christian some of the sweetest and holiest morals of his faith; and thus is the name of Woman hallowed by religion likewise as well as sanctified by love.

From all that the reader has seen of Lucy's character, he will not be disposed to dissent from the assertion that she was one of the loveliest and most loveable, as well as loving types of that pure and virtuous portion of womankind whose praises we have endeavored to record. And was not Frederick happy now?—happy as he stood by the couch where his young wife lay with the child nestling in her bosom?—happy when, convalescent again, she was enabled to accompany him in his evening walk with the babe in her arms?—happy, too, when in the midst of his pupils he glanced aside and beheld her peeping over her work at the sweet infant that lay slumbering in her lap? Yes: Frederick was completely happy. We say *completely*, because he had ceased to think of the possibility of danger; or if he had not altogether ceased to think of it, he at least believed it to be so little probable as to be no more dreaded than the fall of a house, a fatal flash of lightning, or any one of those casualties which, though possible, are nevertheless held to be too remote to trouble the even tenor of existence. More than a year had now passed since he quitted his regiment; and never once during his residence at Carlisle had he met a single soul who could proclaim the fact that his name was *not* Mortimer, but that it was Lonsdale the Deserter!

It was not however altogether so with Lucy. Woman is of a less sanguine disposition than man: whatever *may* or *can* happen, she never regards as extremely improbable: but there are times when she thinks of it—and though perhaps not with such a fixity of the mental regards as to materially disturb the equanimity of her happiness, she nevertheless *does* think of it, and likewise pray heaven to avert the calamity. Thus is it that when misfortunes come, woman is more prepared than man to meet them, and can all the better fulfil her heavenly mission of man's consoler. Lucy sometimes thought of the possibility of their present hap-

piness being disturbed: but she did not *exactly* apprehend it. When the idea stole into her mind, she sent up a prayer from the depth of her heart, and usually felt solaced. Occasionally however, since the birth of her child, the saddening idea would dwell with a greater pertinacity in her soul; and when Frederick occasionally went out alone on any little business—such as to make a call upon the parents of his pupils, and so forth—she would find herself falling into a somewhat mournful reverie while gazing upon her babe's countenance, and wondering whether that dear child would ever have to be subjected to miseries and privations through anything that might happen to its father? Often would Lucy blame herself for giving way to these reflections, which she fancied showed a mistrust of Providence, and in Frederick's society she had of late never found herself yielding to the saddening influence. So devoted was her love for her husband, that his presence filled her soul with lustre, as a strong light shed throughout a room leaves not a nook nor corner dark beyond the reach of its effulgence.

The Autumn had passed—Winter had come—the Christmas season was at hand; and little Freddy—for the boy had been christened after its father—was thriving apace. Shallow-minded young men or old bachelors may turn up their noses and sneer as they will at the foolish fondness which fathers sometimes show towards their children: but it is an incontrovertible fact, that the best men are those who are the most devoted to these little innocent beings whom they have called into existence. Be assured that the father who can take a child, dandle it upon his knees, toss it up in the air, play with it as if he were only a great big boy himself, and even talk what may be termed the silliest nonsense to it,—is a man in whose heart are concentered all the most generous feelings, the noblest sympathies, and the sublimest elements of virtue. Such a man was Frederick; and in his devoted kindness towards his son—in the joyous hilarity with which during a leisure half-hour he would play with the little being—his adoring Lucy beheld a thousand additional proofs of the love which he cherished towards herself.

Not only was the young couple thus happy, but likewise prosperous. The claims of the new-comer upon Lucy had necessarily absorbed much of the time that she used to devote to needlework: and thus her earnings were much less than they were wont to be: but on the other hand Frederick's school had increased—he had thirty day-scholars—and the two ground floor apartments had been thrown into one to constitute the school-room. Our hero and heroine had engaged the first floor as well; and it was through no selfish feeling that Mrs. Harrison, the worthy widow-woman, often congratulated them on their increasing prosperity which had caused them to become such excellent lodgers for her. Their income was a comfortable one; and during the fifteen months they had been settled at Carlisle, they had put by fifty pounds.

It was Christmas Eve—and all Lucy's pro-



parations for the following day were complete. The parents of one of Frederick's pupils had sent him a fine turkey as a present. and Lucy, with an arch smile, had assured her husband that the plum-pudding would be unexceptionable. They were sitting at tea—the babe was slumbering in his cradle—the curtains were closed—the candles were lighted—a cheerful fire blazed in the grate—and the kettle was singing upon the hob—when Mrs. Harrison entered the room somewhat in a hurry, and stated that the father of one of Frederick's scholars had been thrown out of his gig and met with a very severe accident. It did not however appear that the injury was likely to prove fatal: but still it was a severe one. Our hero and Lucy both expressed their unfeigned sorrow; and when tea was over, Frederick thought that it would be but courteous and kind if he were to step round and make personal inquiries concerning the sufferer. Lucy at once coincided with the suggestion; and Frederick, having embraced her and the babe, put on his hat and cloak and sallied forth. It was a fine frosty night, with the ground as hard as marble, and a clear moon shining in the midst of a cloudless sky. It was however exceedingly cold; and Frederick, having just left a nice warm room, sped rapidly along. Having made the inquiry, and to his satisfaction learnt that the injury was not even so great as had been represented to him,—he was wending his way home again, when on turning the corner of a street he ran somewhat violently against an individual who was coming from the opposite direction: then, as they both instinctively drew back to beg each other's pardon, Frederick to his horror and dismay recognized Obadiah Bates, the Oakleigh barber. The recognition was mutual; and for a few moments they stood speechless, gazing upon each other—Frederick in consternation, and Bates in shame.

The latter was however the first to regain his composure, or rather his wonted effrontery; and seizing Frederick's hand, he said, "Come, Lonsdale, I hope there's no ill will?"

"No, no—not the slightest," stammered out our unhappy hero, who felt as if the fabric of his happiness had suddenly been shaken by an earthquake, and was already toppling ready to fall and bury himself and those he held so dear in its ruins.

"Well, I am glad to hear you say that," said Bates: and then there was another pause, while they again surveyed each other.

The scrutinizing eyes of the barber showed him that Lonsdale was well-dressed: that is to say, not with any pretension, but in a style that bespoke comfortable circumstances. On the other hand, Bates himself looked the same shabby starveling he always was; and with neither great coat nor cloak he seemed half perished with the cold.

"What has brought you to Carlisle?" asked Frederick, scarcely knowing what he said: for there was a bewilderment in his brain. His mental glance reverted to the interior of the parlor he had so recently quitted—and beholding his wife and child there as he had left

them, one smiling and happy, the other slumbering in the sweet sleep of innocence—a horrible pang shot through his heart; for he felt as if this unfortunate encounter was the beginning of a fresh series of evils.

"What's brought me to Carlisle?" repeated Bates. "Why, a precious unpleasant business, I can tell you."

"Unpleasant? What is it?" asked Frederick, with nervous quickness, for he took the allusion to himself, in the same way that a man who has committed a crime takes any random word bordering upon the topic as an accusation thrown out against him.

"Why, it's all about a letter that's lost!"—and his answer was some little relief to Lonsdale's agitated mind. "The fact is you, see—but it's uncommon cold standing here, and I want to have five minutes' chat with you. Where can we go? Do you live near here? for I suppose you *do* live at Carlisle?"

"No," replied Frederick, forced by the terrible urgency of his position to tell a falsehood. "I am only here for a day or two—but—and—"

"Well, then, let's go to your hotel or tavern, or wherever you are stopping—or into this public-house if you like:" and he pointed to one which was near where they had stopped short.

Lonsdale hated public-houses—he never frequented them, but still he dare not offend the barber, and therefore at once accompanied him to that which he had pointed out. There happened to be no one in the parlor at the time they entered, and Bates, taking another survey of our hero's appearance, muttered to himself, "It isn't ale or grog that he ought to stand, togg'd as he is: it's wine!" Then he added aloud, "Come, Fred, for old acquaintance sake we ought to drink a bottle of wine together."

"With all my heart," said Lonsdale, trying to look cheerful, although when he thought of the past he felt bitterly the necessity which compelled him thus to assume an aspect of friendliness towards this scoundrel who had practised such diabolical treachery towards him.

The wine was ordered, and they sat down at a table together.

"Here's to you," said Bates, raising his glass to his lips: "and here's to a renewal of old friendship;" then, having tossed off his wine, he proceeded to observe with his usual volubility, "Oh, about that letter business I was going to tell you. The fact is, you see, that fellow Mummery, at Oakleigh—you recollect him—swears that he put a fifty-pound note into a letter directed to his brother-in-law who lives here in Carlisle; but the brother-in-law appears never to have had the letter—and so, what with one thing and another, it's hinted that the letter never left Oakleigh at all, but was lost through my carelessness, or else intercepted, or self-appropriated, or something of that sort. By-the-bye, you may not know I have had the post-office at Oakleigh for the last fifteen or sixteen months. Well, the Post-master-General has been written to, and there has been an officer from the Post-Office in London down to Oakleigh, making inquiries; and



the long and short of it is, that if I don't trace the letter or make good the fifty pound, I shall lose the post-office and perhaps get into a worse scrape still. Mummery says he doesn't want to hurt me if I can only make it right with his brother-in-law. It seems that this brother-in-law lent Mummery the money a long time ago just when I first had the post-office—and it was to repay the loan that Mummery, as he says, posted the letter with the fifty pounds. Didn't you always think Mummery was well to do? But it seems he isn't though. However, I have been obliged to come to Carlisle to see the brother-in-law, in the hope of getting him to give me time to make good the money, because if he's satisfied, the authorities in London will be satisfied too. But the fellow is a brute to deal with: he never was in Oakleigh in his life, and therefore doesn't care a fig for any of the Oakleigh people, and says he doesn't see why he should be put out of the way for me. So you see, Fred, that I am in a deuce of a mess, and it's a very fortunate thing that I happen to tumble in with you."

"Fortunate?" ejaculated Lonsdale.

"Yes—to be sure: *fortunate!*" repeated the barber, emphasizing the word. "It's pretty clear," he continued, looking him hard in the face, "that you are in jolly good circumstances: and therefore I know you won't refuse an old friend the loan of a fifty pound note."

An expression of anguish swept over Lonsdale's countenance. He was no niggard of his money, but was naturally of a most generous disposition; it was, nevertheless, most galling—most torturing, to contemplate this vile extortion that was sought to be practised by one who, so far from having any claim upon him, ought, if circumstances would permit the infliction of such chastisement, to be kicked out ignominiously from his presence. But to feel himself in the power of such an individual, and to be compelled to give the whole of his little savings to such a wretch, was indeed sufficient to call up that look of anguish to our hero's countenance. The barber noticed it, but did not choose to make any observation, for he understood tolerably well what was passing in Frederick's mind.

"Come, you don't drink," he said, refilling his glass for the sixth or seventh time, while that of Lonsdale remained altogether untouched.

"I do not care about wine," replied Frederick. "But let us understand each other," he immediately continued, now determined to come to the point at once. "If I give you fifty pounds, what guarantee have I that you will not reward me with ingratitude?"

"I shouldn't do such a thing!" exclaimed the barber.

"Ah! but remember past circumstances," rejoined Lonsdale bitterly.

"Oh! but it's very different now. I was so poor and pinched, as you well know, that even the few shillings I got from Langley for doing what I did, was an object: but now, if I can only make up this fifty pounds, it will put me all right, and I shall consider myself your debtor in every way."

"If I were certain that you would really keep my secret," continued Frederick,—"that is to say, if when you go back to Oakleigh, you will carefully abstain from mentioning that you saw me—I will give you the amount you require."

Mr. Bates poured forth a perfect volley of the most emphatic assurances, and Lonsdale, bidding him wait there until his return, sallied forth from the public-house.

Oh! how sad, how sad a thing it is for a man who fondly and devotedly loves his wife, and who cherishes her happiness as the only element of his own, to be compelled to go into the presence of that wife and break to her the intelligence of a new calamity! Such was Frederick's position now. For a moment, in the deep love which he felt for Lucy, he thought of suppressing the circumstance and devising some excuse for requiring the whole amount of their little savings—or even borrowing the required sum from one of the numerous friends he had made during his residence at Carlisle. But no: a second thought convinced him of the prudence of telling his wife everything. They were so completely one, that he felt he had no more right to keep back a grief from her knowledge, than he had to withhold a happiness; and therefore he resolved to deal frankly and candidly with her. But as he entered the house and ascended to their sitting-room on the first floor he experienced so ineffable a load of misery that he could have cried out. On opening the door he beheld Lucy bending over the cradle; and as she turned around to greet him with a joyous glance, and with a smile upon the lip that awaited the usual kiss, she was instantaneously smitten with his aspect, so altered did it seem from what it was when he went forth! Her first thought was that the individual whom he had been to see had died of his injury; and this belief was strengthened by his prolonged absence.

Then followed a scene that was painful indeed. Frederick strained his wife to his breast, and gently broke to her the whole circumstance which had occurred. Notwithstanding the precautions he thus took in graduating the development of the intelligence, it proved a sad blow to Lucy: but subduing any passionate outburst of grief, she at once began to minister the tenderest and most endearing consolations to her husband, beseeching him not to give way to despair, but to summon all his fortitude to his aid—for his own sake, for her's, and for that of the beloved infant sleeping in its cradle. Oh! how deeply at that moment did Frederick appreciate the angel character of his wife! how full of a sweet anodyne were the words which came from her lips in the soft music of her voice! how replete with love and devotion were the looks that her beautiful blue eyes bent upon him! Again and again did he press her to his heart; and then, having taken from his writing-desk the whole amount of their little savings, he snatched another embrace and sped back to the public-house where he had left the barber.

Bates, having during his absence finished

the wine, was now engaged in the discussion of a large tumbler of brandy-and-water and a cigar: for he thought that as Lonsdale would have to pay the reckoning, he need not stint himself in his present enjoyments. It was a hard matter for our hero to maintain a composed look in the presence of this man from whose base treachery he had already suffered so much, and who was now so mercilessly plundering him: but he saw the necessity of continuing in the same conciliatory humor which he had already adopted; and as he counted down the money upon the table, he said to Bates, "I now give you the savings of more than a twelvemonth's toil. May you be moved by my conduct towards you to keep my secret! One single word inadvertently dropped from your lips, will suffice to set upon my track those who would show me no mercy; and if so, it would be ruin—utter ruin—not merely for myself alone——"

But Lonsdale could not finish the sentence. He thought of his wife—he thought of his child—and his heart swelled with emotions to a degree that choked his utterance. Tears started into his eyes: but he hastily dashed them away; and ringing the bell for the waiter, paid the expenses incurred for Mr. Bates's regalement.

"I suppose that you are married to Lucy, Miss Davis that was, Mrs. Lonsdale that is?" said the barber, after having joyously conveyed to his pocket the fifty sovereigns which he had just extorted from the young man. "Davis the bailiff seems to have felt his daughter's loss terribly. I don't mean that he shows it in the form of grief, because he isn't the kind of chap to do that; but he's grown harsher and severer than ever towards all who are under him. A precious tyrant he has become, I can tell you; and so morose and reserved to everybody in the village, that nobody dares speak to him."

"You will pardon me for not remaining any longer with you," interrupted Lonsdale. "But once more I conjure—I entreat you, not to breathe a word of your having met me!"

"It will be just the same as if we hadn't met at all," replied Bates. "Come, give us your hand, Fred, and let us part good friends."

Our hero did give his hand to the man—for he dared not refuse; but the very touch sent a cold thrill to his heart's core, as if he had suddenly come in contact with the slimy form of a coiled-up serpent. He then issued from the public-house; but as he returned homeward, he stopped and looked back several times to assure himself that Bates was not following him. There was no appearance that the barber was doing so; and in a few minutes Frederick was once more with his wife and child. He told Lucy how solemnly Bates had promised to keep his secret; but they both knew in their hearts that they could trust with but little certainty to the pledges of such a man. It was a mournful Christmas Eve for them; they felt that they had now nothing but the immensity of their own love to console them; for even the smiles of the babe, when he woke up and Lucy took him upon her lap, sent a pang to their hearts as they simultaneously experienced a

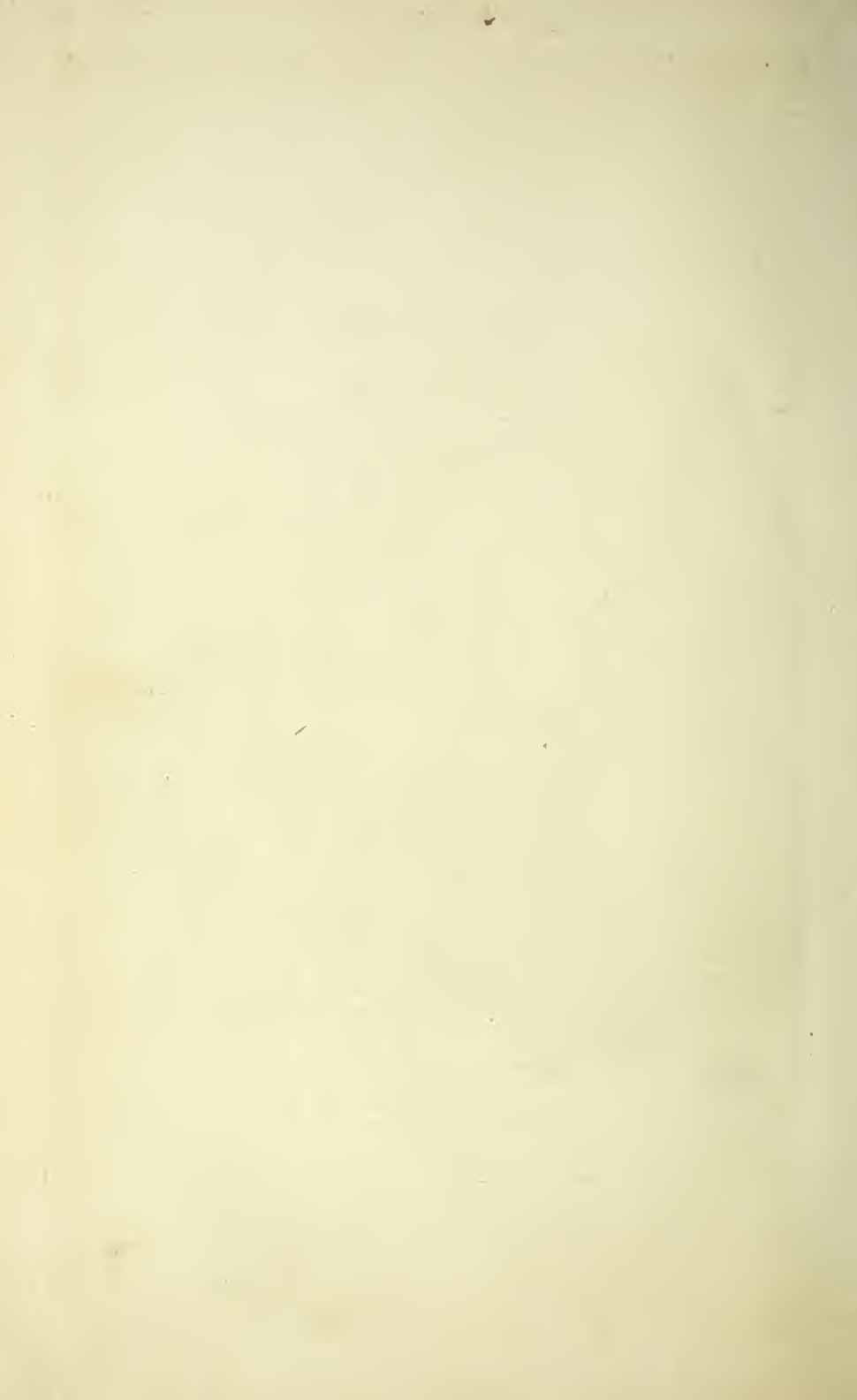
dread lest the future had sorrows in store for themselves, the effects of which would redound upon the head of the little one.

The following day was Christmas. They went to church as usual; and though always accustomed to pray fervently, there was on this occasion a deeper earnestness, if possible, in their devotions—a more yearning strength of intercession sent up from their hearts, that heaven would preserve them from those terrible ills which would shatter the entire fabric of their happiness. Their neighbors and friends could not help noticing, on the way to and from church, that the couple in whose welfare so generous an interest was experienced, had something like a shade of melancholy upon their countenances; although heaven knows Lucy did her best to assume a cheerful aspect in order that she might diminish her husband's despondency. When the Christmas dinner was served up, she smiled as she had been wont to do, and by her looks endeavored to throw beams of cheerfulness upon the scene; but Frederick partook of the repast with an inward sense of bitterness, as if everything he eat turned into gall. In the evening, when the curtains were closed, the candles lighted, and they sat before the fire that blazed in the grate—Lucy having the baby upon her lap—Frederick felt that he could no longer look upon this as his home, but that it was merely a temporary resting-place from which circumstances might compel them to flee suddenly, or whence he might be dragged away ignominiously. It seemed as if all his happiness had been poisoned at its very source. Full well—*too well*, did Lucy comprehend everything that was passing in his mind; and she redoubled her endearments, her consolations, and her caresses. Throughout the whole of that day not a word passed between the husband and wife respecting the one incident which now engrossed all their thoughts; and though by a sort of tacit understanding they had for that day avoided the painful topic, yet on the following one they with a similar spontaneity felt the necessity of deliberating most seriously upon it.

There had been a reward of ten pounds offered for Lonsdale's apprehension as a deserter. Bates was sure to know of this, as Frederick had received the proofs that he was in correspondence with Sergeant Langley. Would the barber be contented with the sum he had extorted from his victim? or would he ruthlessly sacrifice all Frederick's future prospects for the sake of obtaining this additional ten pounds? Would he be moved to compassion? or would his own intense selfishness prevail? Herein lay the danger: for that Bates was tolerably well convinced Frederick was really living at Carlisle, there could be scarcely a doubt. Under these circumstances Frederick and Lucy beheld two alternatives presented to their contemplation. One was to remain where they were and risk everything: the other was to lose no time in taking their departure to some other place. If they adopted the former alternative, would they not exist in constant terror, trembling at every knock at the front door, and starting every time any









one happened to inquire for them? But if they adopted the latter alternative, would they not be compelled to break up their little home, renounce all in a moment the certain and present means of obtaining a livelihood, absorb in travelling expenses whatsoever funds they could still command, and perhaps plunge themselves into penury while vainly and ineffectually struggling to re-establish their position in another place? It was the middle of winter too—a hard winter—with every chance of a prolonged severity of nipping cold; and as the young couple looked around their comfortable apartments, they naturally recoiled from the idea of exposing their tender babe to the probabilities of a chill, cheerless garret, with the bare walls frowning in bleakness upon them—no fire in the grate—no bed upon the floor—and destitution as their stern, pitiless guest. But still, as they thus discoursed upon the two alternatives presented to their contemplation,—discoursed, too, more with the eloquent language of the eyes than in uttered words respecting the saddest portion of their prospects,—Lucy besought her husband to understand her well when she assured him that if he considered a removal absolutely necessary for his safety, she was prepared to enter with fortitude upon this new phase in their career,—adding that as he knew best, it was only for him to decide and she would be content. Lonsdale could not bear the idea of exposing his wife and child to the dreariest chances and the direst privations, for the purpose of flying from an evil which after all might be only imaginary; and therefore he resolved that they should remain where they were, and trust in heaven.

Several days now passed; and though Lucy smiled as sweetly as ever, yet it was impossible the husband and wife could conceal from themselves that their happiness had received a blow—that a sad change had entered their dwelling—and that they could no longer sit down and discourse with any confidence on the future. They even felt, as they partook of one meal, that they might not be together to sit down to the next; and when they retired to rest at night, it was with the sickening thought that on the following night they might be torn asunder. In spite of all her efforts to maintain a cheerful aspect, Lucy grew visibly paler day by day—while Frederick also became haggard and careworn. They forced themselves to eat lest they should too fearfully reveal to each other the state of their thoughts; but they had no appetite—and often did their hearts heave against their food. The bread which they earned by their honest industry, was no longer sweetened by the sense that it might be eaten in security. Thus, at the expiration of a fortnight Lonsdale was compelled to arrive at the conclusion that this state of things could not last, and that if they continued such a mode of existence, they would be killing themselves by inches. Straining his wife to his breast, he spoke out frankly, saying that they must remove elsewhere. Lucy at once convinced her husband that he might reckon upon her fortitude; and keeping back

her tears—stifling the convulsive sobs which made her heart swell almost to bursting—she set about the immediate preparations for their departure.

Mrs. Harrison, the worthy widow-woman, was really shocked when so suddenly and unexpectedly informed that circumstances compelled them to leave Carlisle. She knew that her lodgers had no debts—for they paid their way with the most scrupulous punctuality; and Lucy, not choosing to descend to any falsehood, had not given her to understand that they had still better prospects elsewhere. Mrs. Harrison could not ask for explanations, as none were volunteered; and therefore her surprise was equal to her sorrow. For the greater portion of the night succeeding the day on which the resolve of departure was taken, Frederick sat up writing notes to the parents of his pupils,—stating that circumstances compelled him thus abruptly to give up his school, and warmly thanking those whose patronage and friendship he had enjoyed. It was a sad, sad task: but his mind was made up with fortitude. Lucy would not retire to rest: she pretended to have yet many things to pack up, that she might remain with her husband; and in her endearing caresses and soothing words, did he experience some degree of consolation.

When morning came, and the school was assembled as usual, Frederick addressed his little scholars, bidding them all an affectionate farewell—giving them some excellent advice—and counselling them to bear in their minds the precepts which he had endeavored to inculcate. He then dismissed them with the notes to their parents; and when the room was cleared and he stood alone there, he could not help giving way to a sudden outburst of grief. At that instant the door opened—two arms were thrown fondly round his neck—and a softly murmuring voice implored him to be comforted. Again and again did he press his beloved wife to his breast; and as she exerted all her fortitude, he felt alike strengthened and consoled.

The preparations for departure were now completely made; and in a few minutes a porter would come to take the boxes to the coach-office. When their rent was paid, they had exactly four pounds in money left; but Frederick had a watch, and Lucy had her own little articles of jewellery—and therein existed the means of obtaining additional resources. Thus they were not without the hope of being able to manage for some little time to come. The porter made his appearance for the luggage—the farewells to Mrs. Harrison were said—and our hero and heroine were issuing forth from the house, the latter with the child in her arms, when they started back in dismay on beholding an individual in a red coat rapidly approaching up the street, followed by two or three persons in plain clothes. They did not at once recognize that man who wore the uniform: the circumstance itself had struck them as fearfully ominous; but the second glance which they flung towards the individual, showed them that he was none other than Sergeant Langley!

"My own dear dear wife," said Lonsdale, in a low, hurried, but earnest whisper "in the name of God, support yourself to meet this trial!"

"Yes, dearest Frederick—I am calm—I am nerved—But you!"

"If you bear up, I shall!"—and he bent upon her a look of the most adoring fondness.

The next instant Sergeant Langley reached the house, attended by the town-constables, whom he had brought to assist in making the capture.

"I am your prisoner—I surrender myself," said Lonsdale, knowing that resistance was vain: indeed he dreamt not of attempting any.

The whole truth now flashed to the comprehension of Mrs. Harrison. She saw that Frederick was a deserter! But deeply, deeply sympathizing with him and his young wife, she at once said all she could to console them both. Ah! and consolation was indeed necessary, notwithstanding their mutual assurances of fortitude, when the sergeant, with a look of diabolical malignity, produced a pair of handcuffs, which he ordered the constables to fasten upon Frederick's wrists.

"For heaven's sake spare me this indignity!" exclaimed our hero. "I will not attempt to escape—God is my witness that I will not!"

Then Lucy, taking the babe in her arms, sank upon her knees to implore Sergeant Langley's forbearance in respect to those ignominious irons: and even the constables, moved by a scene which was full of indescribable pathos, held back. In a stern voice Langley commanded them to do their duty; and Lonsdale threw an imploring glance upon his wife, that she would summon all her fortitude to her aid. She rose from her knees, and for a moment placing her child in Mrs. Harrison's arms, embraced her husband fondly, at the same time whispering some words of solace in his ear, together with the assurance that if he would bear the calamity with courage, her's would not fail.

"Come—I have no time for this nonsense," exclaimed Sergeant Langley, tapping his cane violently upon the floor of the passage where the scene took place. "The coach is going—and we must be off."

"And I may be allowed to accompany my husband?" said Lucy in an imploring voice.

"Oa! if you have got the money to pay your fare, I can't prevent you going by the same coach," returned Langley, not daring for very shame sake to speak too brutally to the afflicted wife.

But we will not linger over this scene of mingled pathos, anguish, and humiliation. Suffice it to say that the handcuffs were put upon Frederick's wrists, and that he was conducted as a prisoner along the street which he had so often threaded amongst the friendly and respectful salutations of the neighbors. He kept his head bent down, looking neither to the right nor to the left: for he felt as if the eyes of the whole world were upon him. Lucy, having taken another farewell of Mrs. Harrison, followed her husband to the coach-office, the porter bringing up the rear with the lug-

gage. All the places inside the coach were previously taken: but there were just three outside that remained vacant. The Sergeant at once paid for two—his own and Frederick's. Lonsdale besought his wife to wait for another coach, that she might obtain an inside place: but she assured him that she could manage to wrap up the babe so warmly that there need be no fear for the beloved infant;—while, as for herself, no dread of cold nor any earthly suffering should induce her to separate from her husband. She accordingly took the third place, and was thus enabled to sit by Frederick's side.

The news of Lonsdale's arrest as a deserter had spread like wildfire in the immediate neighborhood of Mrs. Harrison's house; and reaching amongst others the ears of the worthy tradesman who had sent the turkey as a present, this individual wrapped up something in a paper, and speeding down to the coach-office, arrived just as the vehicle was about to start. Reaching up his hand to Mrs. Lonsdale, he said, "Take this—take this: and may God bless you both!"

Lucy mechanically took the little packet which he presented to her; and as she felt that it contained money, she was about to express her thanks—but the worthy tradesman was already speeding away from the spot where he had performed this benevolent act. The little parcel contained five sovereigns: and thus, when in the course of a few hours the child began evidently to suffer from the effects of cold, notwithstanding Lucy's anxious care, she suffered herself to be prevailed upon to take an inside place which became vacant by its occupant reaching the end of his journey.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE COURT-MARTIAL.

A WEEK had elapsed since the terrible misfortune which thus overtook the Lonsdales at Carlisle; and we now behold poor Lucy the occupant of an humble lodging at Portsmouth. It was one small ready-furnished room that she had thus hired at a low rent, and where she sat with her babe in her arms. But that child's father was not there! He was a prisoner at the barracks, about to be brought before the court-martial already summoned to take cognizance of his case. To say that Lucy was unhappy, were to say nothing: she was almost overwhelmed with grief. Yet for her child's sake, as well as for the sake of that husband from whom she was separated, did she endeavor to the utmost of her power to bear up against the sense of bitter, bitter affliction. It was not so much that their home was broken up, and that she was separated from Frederick, that she experienced this poignant anguish. The blow was struck, and she could have resigned herself to it with a becoming fortitude: but when she thought that he whom she loved so devotedly, so adoringly—every hair of whose head was more precious than gold in her estimation,—that *he*, this cherished one, would be



tied up to the accursed triangle and lacerated with the diabolical scourge,—Oh! then it was that her heart was racked with intolerable pangs—that her brain was harrowed with excruciations of direst anguish—that her whole being was convulsed by one rending paroxysm of ineffable agony. She knew that when the punishment was over and he should have recovered from its effects, they would be enabled to meet—that every day he could pass hours with her—and consequently that their separation was not eternal; nor did she fear that her own industry would fail to procure sufficient for the wants of herself and little Frederick. But, oh! in front of her, and closest of all objects to her mental vision, stood the appalling punishment to which her husband was certain to be subjected. It rose like a wall of brass before her eyes, barring whatsoever hopeful or cheering prospects that might possibly lie beyond. It was sad—very sad indeed, to think of this beautiful, amiable, and affectionate young woman, who had never injured a living soul—never done harm willingly to the meanest of God's creatures—thus plunged into an abyss of such appalling woe.

It was at the house of an old couple in a retired part of the town of Portsmouth, that Lucy had found a lodging. She had frankly told them her circumstances, and explained to them the position of her unfortunate husband. They were people who eked out their other little means by letting this one room in their humble habitation; and they cared but little who occupied it, so long as their rent was regularly paid. That Lucy possessed the power of satisfying their demands in this respect, they received ocular demonstration; and therefore they had not hesitated to let her have the room. They were not actually bad-hearted people—but they certainly had little of the milk of human kindness in their constitutions; and consequently their deportment towards Mrs. Lonsdale was that of a mere civility, without any attempt to bestow sympathy or consolation. But even if such an attempt were made, it could in no way have diminished the unfortunate young woman's sorrows. They were too profound for the reach of sympathy—too colossal to be affected by the words of consolation. Her's was a grief, too, which made her court solitude, and in her little chamber did she remain musing to her child—at one time brooding in deep despondency upon her afflictions—at another so excited by anguish that she felt as if she could go mad!

All communications of a direct nature between herself and her husband was stopped; but the wife of one of his comrades called upon her from kind motives, to let her know that he was well in health and bearing up with becoming fortitude against his calamity. He was lodged in the black-hole, a sentry constantly keeping guard over him; and the regimental court-martial, as already stated, was summoned to try him.

We must now observe that the entire corps of the regiment had a few months back arrived in England; and the depot was consequently merged therein. The Colonel of the regiment

was named Wyndham; and Lucy learnt, with an augmenting grief, that he was a stern, severe, implacable man—not merely a rigid disciplinarian, but a tyrannical martinet. She likewise learnt that Gerald Redburn was with his regiment; and thus the poor creature could not even console herself with the hope that some leniency might be shown in the award of punishment in respect to her husband. Nevertheless, Lucy was resolved that the moment the result of the court-martial should be known, she would arm herself with all her courage and wait upon the Colonel to intercede on Frederick's behalf.

We need not dwell at any length upon the details of the military trial to which Lonsdale was subjected. Gerald Redburn was one of the officers forming the court-martial; and in him the unfortunate soldier found a bitter enemy. There was not however much scope for the exercise of any particular malignity, inasmuch as the case was plain enough, with little need for the sifting of evidence. The fact that Lonsdale had deserted, was patent; and of course he did not attempt to deny it. Not choosing to drag his beloved wife's name before the court-martial, nor yet to give publicity to the tyrannous cruelty and treachery of her own father, Frederick contented himself in his defence by the assurance that nothing save a circumstance of the most pressing and urgent nature could have induced him to desert. He frankly admitted the magnitude of the offence, and throwing himself upon the mercy of the court, besought that the punishment to be awarded should be rendered as light as would be deemed compatible with the aim of military justice. There was a fine manly frankness in his demeanor, which could not fail to be noticed by all present; and as there was not the slightest tinge of bold effrontery or reckless hardihood mingled with that air, he succeeded in creating a favorable impression upon the minds of three or four of the officers: but on the majority, whatsoever was noble, or lofty, or open-hearted in his aspect was thrown away, so far as concerned any benefit to himself. Captain Courtenay, having the night before lost a very large sum of money at the gambling table, was in a particular ill-humor at the time. Lieutenant Scott, who continued to be adjutant to the regiment as he had been to the depot, took his cue entirely from the captain, on whom he was accustomed to sponge. The Hon. Gustavus Ferdinand Richard Fitzmorris, not having been in bed all night, yawned fearfully, and played with his dishevelled locks in a conceited manner; while Mr. Paget, the youth from the Royal Military College—now a little past eighteen—assumed a very grave look, and whispered to old Lieutenant Heathcote, next to whom he sat, that it was as bad a ease as any he had ever known—just for all the world as if his experience in such matters was very large indeed! As for Mr. Heathcote himself, he fixed a look of the sincerest compassion upon Lonsdale through the whole proceedings.

The room was cleared for the deliberation of the court-martial—the ballot was taken—and

the result was, as a matter of course, *Guilty*. The sentence which followed, was to the effect that Private Frederick Lonsdale should receive five hundred lashes for the crime of desertion. The prisoner was brought in—his sentence was made known to him—and while he bowed to the decision of the court, his lips were compressed for a moment with the bitterness of a heartfelt anguish and a withering sense of consummate degradation. He was then taken back to the black-hole, with the intimation that the sentence would be carried out so soon as the proceedings of the court-martial should have been approved of at the Horse Guards in London.

It was about nine o'clock in the evening, and Colonel Wyndham, who, being an unmarried man, resided at his quarters in the barracks, was sitting in one of his apartments, drinking champagne with a couple of gay ladies of a certain character. He was a man a year or two under forty,—tall, rather good-looking, and very well made. He had a soldier-like appearance; and when not engaged in such questionable recreations as that in the midst of which we now find him, had a stern severity of look. Now, however, he was completely unbending: the dignity of his rank and of his social position was thrown aside; and he was enjoying himself—if the word *enjoyment* may be used in such a sense—as fully and with as much self-abandonment as the youngest of his officers could have done. He was telling some capital stories, too,—how, when he was a boy, he had run away from Eton—and how when he first entered the army, he was frequently in the habit of absenting himself without leave—but how, by means of the interest of aristocratic connexions, he had invariably escaped any unpleasant consequences beyond a simple reprimand. While thus vaunting his breaches of discipline in the presence of the two gay ladies with whom he was recreating himself, Colonel Wyndham never once reflected that he had that day condemned to a horrible punishment an unfortunate private soldier for his *one* act of desertion!

While Colonel Wyndham was seated between the two ladies, quaffing champagne and telling them anecdotes—receiving in return their mercenary caresses—his servant (one of the private soldiers of the regiment) knocked at the door; and on being bidden to enter, informed his master that a young woman desired to speak with him.

"Who the deuce is she?" asked the Colonel. "She did not give her name, sir," was the response; "as she said it was of no use; but she begged and entreated a few moments' interview. I think, sir—but I don't know—that she is the wife of Private Lonsdale."

"Ah, by Jove!" ejaculated the Colonel; "I recollect that Redburn told me she is a sweet pretty creature. Is it so?"

"She is indeed, sir: and it was her beauty, of which I have heard speak—as well as because she looks very unhappy—that made me think she must be Mrs. Lonsdale."

"Oh, then I will see her!" said the Colonel. "Shall we have her in here?" he exclaimed,

appealing to his two female friends. "But no; that won't exactly do though, when I come to think of it. Excuse me for a few minutes, and I will tell you all about her when I come back."

"Then mind and don't be long," said one of the gay ladies: "or else we shall come and look after you."

The Colonel laughed and rose from his seat; but as he proceeded to the room where Lucy—for she indeed the visitress was—had been desired to wait, he composed his countenance into its habitual severity of look. The moment he entered that room, the light of the candles beaming upon Lucy's countenance, revealed to his eyes an amount of loveliness which far transcended all his expectations. The young woman was pale—very pale; but her pallor only rendered her all the more interesting—and her beautiful blue eyes appeared so full of a melting languor with the deep melancholy resting on them—and her lips, somewhat apart with suspense and an expression of half-entreaty as the Colonel entered the room, revealed teeth of such pearly whiteness, that Wyndham was quite struck by her appearance. His looks settled upon her; and rapidly scanning her from head to foot, they followed all the outlines of a form modelled to the most symmetrical proportions—so that his passion was at once excited, and he was smitten with a desire to possess this beautiful creature. He did not however permit his feelings to be betrayed by his countenance, although the severity of his aspect became somewhat relaxed under the influence of Lucy's loveliness.

"Who are you? and what do you require of me?" he asked, affecting not to have the least idea who she was.

"I am the wife, sir, of that unfortunate young man Frederick Lonsdale:"—and as Lucy thus spoke in a voice clouded with grief, but still full of the most melting melody—melancholy's own soft murmuring cadences—"he tears gushed forth from her eyes.

"Unfortunate do you call him?" said the Colonel. "A crime wilfully committed, cannot be regarded as a misfortune that overtakes a person in spite of himself."

"Ah! sir, if you only knew all the circumstances," exclaimed Lucy, clasping her hands and looking up with tearful entreaty at the Colonel, "I am sure you would pity Frederick Lonsdale!"

"And therefore I suppose you are come to intercede for him?" observed Wyndham.

"Yes, sir: and on my knees do I implore your mercy!" cried Lucy, sinking down at the Colonel's feet. "I have heard, sir—alas, I have heard the terrible punishment to which he has been condemned; and it is greater than even in my most horrible misgivings I had expected. I know that he must be punished—I do not ask you to pardon him altogether; because I am too fatally aware that such a request would not obtain a moment's attention. But I do beseech you, Colonel Wyndham, to mitigate the penalty. You have the power—and I conjure you to exercise it. Oh, sir! you behold at your feet a wife who is almost distracted; and if I had dared, I should have brought my



child to place it at your feet also, that its innocent presence might plead in unconscious eloquence for its father!"

"Come, come—rise up," said the Colonel; and taking Lucy's hands, he raised her from her suppliant posture. "There! now sit down—and we will talk the matter over."

Lucy thought there was kindness alike in his words and in his manner; and hope began to warm her heart. She did sit down—for she felt faint, and ill, and exhausted from the effects of mental anguish, sleepless nights, and an inability to take a proper quantity of food through almost utter loss of appetite, although she was still giving its natural nourishment to her child from her bosom. She looked up into the Colonel's countenance; and again clasping her hands, she tried to speak: but her feelings overpowered her, and she could not at the moment give utterance to a word.

"You know," said the Colonel, "that your husband is condemned to receive five hundred lashes!"

Lucy groaned in the bitterness of her spirit and wrung her hands with hysterical despair, then again she clasped them, crying, "For God's sake, be merciful, sir! be merciful!"

"You are, then, very much attached to your husband?" he said, devouring her with his regards, and yet still so masking his features with a calmness of aspect that she comprehended not the real meaning of his looks.

"Oh, sir! he is my chief happiness in this world!" exclaimed Lucy with impassioned vehemence. "If he were taken from me, I should die. Not even our child would prove a solace or a link strong enough to bind me to existence!"

"Ah! then you love your husband so very dearly!" said the Colonel more drily and sternly than he had yet spoken; for it struck him that he had no chance of success with such a wife; but at the next instant another idea occurred to him, suggesting that in the very depth of this extreme love of her's there was a hope for himself—and he accordingly said, as if in a musing tone, "Well, it is in my power to mitigate this sentence, although the case is a bad one. You see, it is not the mere fact of desertion, but that of remaining away from the regiment nearly eighteen months—"

"Ah, sir! but the circumstances were so peculiar," exclaimed Lucy, the flame of hope burning still more brightly in her heart. "Frederick was attached to me: our faith was plighted to each other. He learnt by accident that my father sought to compel me to wed another—and in his despair he fled from the regiment. Having once taken that step, how could he return? Oh, Colonel Wyndham! believe me—believe me—this is no ordinary case! It is replete with extenuation for Frederick!"

"And you love him so fondly," said the Colonel, again fixing his eyes devoutly upon Lucy, "that you are resolved to leave nothing unattempted to procure a mitigation of his sentence?"

"Oh, sir! is it not my duty to do all I can for that purpose? Believe me, Colonel Wyndham, if by any sacrifice on my part," continued

Lucy, speaking with the strong excitement of her feeling, "I can achieve that end—if by going forth in the rags of beggary to drag myself and my child through the streets and implore alms, I could diminish but by a single stripe the horrible punishment that awaits my husband.—how cheerfully, Oh! how cheerfully would I do it!"

"Ah! you would make any sacrifice?" said the Colonel. "Do you not speak somewhat rashly or is your love for your husband indeed so strong that—"

"Any sacrifice short of dishonor!" exclaimed Lucy; and she felt a species of shock at the idea that her words had been somewhat too literally interpreted.

"But what if the only means of obtaining a mitigation of your husband's sentence—"

"Enough, Colonel Wyndham!" ejaculated the terrified Lucy; for it was now no longer possible to mistake the meaning of the looks which were fastened upon her.

She rose from her seat, coloring with indignation, yet half broken-hearted; and she was moving towards the door, when the Colonel exclaimed, "Stop a moment, Mrs. Lonsdale! If you really love your husband as you say—"

"I do, sir—I do—heaven knows how fondly I love him!"—and Lucy did stop short: for it instantaneously struck her that what the Colonel had just now looked and said, might only have been to put her affection to the test.

"Then if your love be so great," he at once rejoined, "there ought to be no sacrifice which you are unprepared to make. Come, Mrs. Lonsdale—do not be so over-particular. I have the power to mitigate your husband's sentence—I can reduce it one-half—yes, even to less than one-half—and I will do so—but upon one condition."

Lucy knew not whether she heard aright, or if she were putting the correct interpretation upon the words which she did hear: and she gazed upon the Colonel in a sort of bewildered ment.

"It rests with you," he said—"entirely with you, to what extent your husband's punishment shall reach:"—and as he thus spoke, he took her hand and pressed it, at the same time gazing upon her in a manner which could no longer leave her in the slightest doubt as to his real meaning.

"No, sir—no—never!" she cried hysterically, as she snatched her hand from his clasp.

"One word, Mrs. Lonsdale!" said Wyndham, placing his back against the door of the apartment.

"Not another word, sir! Let me go! Good heavens, that I should have exposed myself to this!"—and she sobbed convulsively.

"Yes, but you must hear me. You know not perhaps the circumstances that may attend this flogging—"

"Ah!"—and Lucy gasped in the agony of suspense, in the dread that some fresh horrors awaited her in respect to her unfortunate husband.

"It is by no means probable," Wyndham went on to observe—and he spoke rapidly—that your husband will be able to endure the

full amount of his punishment on the first occasion: in which case, after he has been enred in the hospital, he will be brought out again to receive the remainder!"

"Oh—but this is horrible, horrible!" exclaimed Lucy, becoming deadly pale, and staggering against a chair for support.

"More than all that," continued the Colonel, "he will be a marked man in the regiment—liable to be tried and condemned again for the slightest offence. Now, it rests with me to mitigate his punishment. It rests with me also to lift as it were the ban for him afterwards. It rests with me, too, to give him opportunities of pushing his way in the *corps*—of obtaining, non-commissioned rank; and all this will I do for him, if you—"

"Colonel Wyndham," interrupted Lucy, at her presence of mind being brought back to her aid by the strong flood of indignation that again set in,—“my husband is too much in your power for me to provoke you by expressing what I think and feel at your present conduct. (Oh, sir! when a wife in the rending anguish of her heart comes to throw herself at your feet and implore mercy for her husband, is it not a cruel thing—to say nothing worse—that she should have another dagger driven deep down into that already too much lacerated heart! I permit me to retire, Colonel Wyndham.”

"You are resolved upon leaving me thus?" he exclaimed, in mingled humiliation and indignation.

"Yes, sir: I have no farther business here:"—and Lucy withdrew from the apartment, the Colonel no longer endeavoring to retain her.

As she descended the stairs, so overpowering a sense of anguish seized upon her that she was compelled to lean against the wall for support. Her feelings had been most cruelly tortured. Had she experienced a stern refusal, the effect would have been less than the insulting overtures which had been made to her. She was truly wretched—wounded in her most delicate sensibilities. For some moments did she rest there, sobbing bitterly—till aroused, or rather startled, by hearing rapid footsteps ascending the stairs. Then she continued to advance; and the next instant found herself face to face with Gerald Redburn. He was in his uniform, having only just left the mess-table, where he had remained drinking; and his countenance was flushed.

"Ah, Lucy," he exclaimed, half in surprise and half with an insolent familiarity; "is this you! I suppose you have been to the Colonel about your husband?"

"Allow me to pass, sir," she said, as he barred her way.

"Just one word, Lucy," cried Gerald, seizing her by the hand: then as she literally tore that hand back from his grasp, he said, "Why, what a fool you are to get into such a rage for nothing. Of course I know the Colonel would do nothing for you: he is severity itself. But if I was to intercede, it would be different."

"I command you to let me pass, sir," interrupted Lucy, resolved to escape from farther insults.

"Not without a kiss," ejaculated Redburn:

"just one kiss! For if you do come into the officers' quarters——"

"Where I expected to find honorable men," exclaimed Lucy indignantly: and as Redburn endeavored to throw his arms around her, she pushed him away with such force that he fell against the balustrades.

"I will be revenged on Lonsdale for this!" he exclaimed in spiteful accents; but Lucy condescended to give no reply—and hurrying down the stairs, she was speedily outside the barracks.

With an anguish in her heart that transcended all the poignancy of any feeling she had ever yet known, she returned to her lodging, where the woman of the house had taken charge of the child during her absence. Then, on again finding herself alone in her chamber, with her babe pressed to her bosom, Lucy wept bitter scalding tears over the little innocent. Her looks were reverted to the happy home which but a few weeks back she and her husband had possessed at Carlisle; and as she thought how suddenly it had been swept away, and how calamity upon calamity had been accumulating ever since, it appeared as if she had been whirled through the rapid stages of a hideous dream. She could look back upon the purity and the innocence of her own life without a blush; and she could not help wondering how it was that heaven thus suffered her to be so tortured.

In three days a communication was received from the Horse Guards to the effect that the proceedings of the court-martial were approved of, and that the punishment was to take place. Very early in the morning of the fourth day, two young drummer-boys might have been seen in an outhouse of the barracks, practising with a cat-o-nine-tails at a sack of sawdust placed in a leaning position against the wall. These youths were to inflict the atrocious punishment—a task which they had never performed before; and as they knew that they themselves would be punished if they did not accomplish their loathsome and revolting duty in what Sergeant-Major Langley termed a "scientific manner," they were thus practising betimes the handling of the accursed instrument of torture.

"I don't think I shall be able to do it," observed one, suddenly flinging down the murderous weapon.

"Don't you?" exclaimed the other, likewise desisting from the experimental flogging of the sack. "Well, that's exactly my feeling. It already makes me heave at the heart."

"I feel all over so queer," resumed the first, "that it seems as if I was going to faint. I am sure I shall never get through it!"—and then the drummer-boy, who was not above sixteen, wiped the tears from his eyes.

"It's dreadful," observed his companion, swallowing a sob, "to be forced into this. Suppose Lonsdale died under it, I should look upon myself as a murderer for the rest of my life. It's too bad! Why shouldn't some of the officers that ordered the punishment, have the inflicting of it?"

At this moment Mr. Langley entered the



out-house. Since the return of the regiment to England, he had been promoted to the post of Sergeant-Major, having previously been only acting in that capacity to the depot. Very proud, and stately, and pompous was Mr. Langley now; and very happy and highly satisfied was he on this particular morning, because the man whom, on account of his very superiority, he hated and detested above all others in the world, was about to receive a crowning humiliation and a fiendish punishment.

The moment Sergeant-Major Langley thus made his appearance in the outhouse, the drummer-boys, frightened into a bastard kind of fortitude, began lashing away at the sack of sawdust again; and the sergeant stood admiring them in silence for a few minutes. In the very desperation of their feelings the poor youths inflicted the blows with all their might and main,—all the more severely, too, because they knew that in this experimentalising there was no human flesh palpitating under the scourge.

"Excellent! capital! famous!" exclaimed Mr. Langley, his admiration bursting forth in these ejaculatory epithets. "Nothing can be better! You will do it well! And mind, always try and hit again in the same place: there is nothing like keeping at the same *no*. Don't spare him, my boys, when you come to the point: he is a bad character, and his spirit must be thrashed out of him. And now come along with me."

Mr. Langley took the two drummers to the canteen; and there he made them each drink a glass of brandy, observing to the keeper of the military public-house, "These are the two brave fellows who are to operate on Lonsdale presently. There's nothing like a glass of brandy to put the mettle into their *fat* will make them as fierce and hardened as tigers. And now, my boys, be off to breakfast, and look sharp."

The two drummers issued forth from the canteen, exchanging rapid looks of unutterable horror at the thought of having been compared to a wild beast in respect to the savage ferocity which they were presently to exercise towards a fellow-creature.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE FLOGGING.

HALF-AN-HOUR afterwards, the regiment was drawn up in the barrack-square, in the midst of which the triangle was erected. This consisted of three poles, about twelve feet in length, fastened all together at the top, and the other three ends spread out in such a manner that the triangle became self-supporting. Several of the accursed weapons lay upon the ground near. We should observe that the cat consists of nine lashes fastened to a wooden handle; and each lash has five hard knots—those at the ends being tied round with pieces of twine or very strong pack-thread, so as to hold them secure and prevent the lashes from unravelling.

Each lash is about twenty inches long; and they are made of a cord knit with a peculiar compactness in order to render the blows they inflict more stinging, cutting, and mercilessly effective.

Near the triangle stood a picher of water and a drinking-cup, so that the victim might from time to time be refreshed, the better to endure the full amount, or at all events as large an amount as possible, of the satanic punishment.

The regiment was drawn up in a square, the triangle being in the midst,—so that every eye could command a view of the hideous ceremony. The colonel, the major, and the staff-officers were upon horseback; the other officers were in their accustomed places. Presently the drummers advanced up to the immediate vicinity of the triangle, so that by the rolling of their drums they might as much as possible drown the cries of human agony, should the victim send any forth. Then, everything being in readiness, Frederick Lonsdale was let out from the black-hole, in his undress uniform, and accompanied by a guard. He walked with a firm step: his countenance was ashy pale—but in the strongly compressed lip, the sternly fixed eyes, and the rigidity of all the muscles of his face, might be read the deeply taken resolution to meet his punishment with as much fortitude as possible. Upon reaching the triangle, his jacket and shirt were stripped off him; and he thus appeared naked to the waist. The flush of shame at being thus exposed in semi-nudity to so many eyes, swept over his countenance, which then again immediately relapsed into ghastly pallor. He was now commanded by Sergeant Langley, who advanced to the spot—his cane in one hand and a little memorandum-book in the other—to stretch himself in such a manner against two poles of the triangle, with his face inward, that one arm and one leg might be attached to each. His arms were distended upwards to their fullest stretch, so as to be high above his head; and then the process of binding immediately commenced. With strong cords was he thus fastened at the wrists, the elbows, the knees, and the ankles, to the poles; so that being held tight in every limb, and at the principal joints of these limbs, he was powerless and immovable—save and except for the writhings and convulsions of excruciating agonies. The regimental surgeon now appeared upon the scene; and the two drummer-boys who had been selected to inflict the chastisement, likewise advanced. Their countenances were very pale; and notwithstanding the brandy, they shivered visibly from head to foot. Langley bent upon them a stern and threatening glance; and again, as when he appeared before them in the outhouse, were they literally frightened into a plucking-up of their courage. Lonsdale was firm and resolute: and thus these poor youths had to exercise greater efforts to collect their own fortitude to inflict the chastisement, than he had to meet it.

"Now then, first drummer-boy!" said Langley, "take up the cat and do your duty:—

and having thus seen, he opened his memorandum-book and took a pencil to write down the number of each lash as he counted them one after the other.

The drummer took the murderous weapon in his hand—made the nine lashes swing twice round above his head—and at the same moment that the drum beat, the first blow was inflicted. Nine long distinct marks of a livid hue appeared upon Frederick's back: while the Sergeant-Major called out "*Oue!*" in a loud voice. The victim felt a strong quiver of mortal agony thrill along every nerve, fibre, and muscle, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet; but no sound escaped him. His lips were compressed firmly together, as if to keep down even the slightest murmur that might be passing behind.

The drummer-boy drew the terrible murderous weapon through the fingers of the left hand, and then looked on the palm to see if any sanguinary stains were there, but blood had not been drawn by that first stroke. He had stepped back a pace or two after inflicting it—then he swung twice round his head again—advanced—and dealt the second blow. The Sergeant-Major called out "*Two!*"—but amidst the rolling of the drums, not a murmur, much less a cry from the lips of Lonsdale, mingled therewith. Yet it had seemed as if a quantity of red hot embers had been suddenly thrown upon his back. Of a livelier red were the traces which the accursed instrument had left behind; and a close observer might have seen that the precise spots which the knots touched, were marked by a little larger space and with a brighter red. The third blow fell, and this time, as the drummer-boy drew the lashes through his left hand, the stains of blood were left behind. Lonsdale had writhed with a quick spasmodic movement: but still no sound from his lips! The fearful work went on up to twenty-five strokes; and then Sergeant Langley cried out "*Halt!*"

Lonsdale's back was by this time a lump of raw flesh: the blood was trickling down upon his pantalouns—and clots fell upon the ground. Not a murmur had as yet escaped him, although at each successive blow the anguish had become more intense—so that it seemed as if boiling oil or molten lead were being sprinkled upon all the nerves laid bare—or as if vulture-talons were fixed upon every fibre and muscle, rending, tearing, and pulling them pitilessly. The surgeon felt the victim's pulse; and water was given to him. He maintained a firm look while the medical man gazed upon his countenance: but he drank the water with avidity—for his throat felt as dry and parched as if he had been swallowing ashes.

The second drummer-boy now took a fresh cat; and prompted by a fierce threatening look from Sergeant Langley, he commenced his work with a vigorous arm. Blow after blow fell, the sergeant counting them in due order, and the drums rolling: but still not a sound—not a cry—not a murmur, from the lips of Lonsdale! Yet at each fresh stroke, it appeared as if every fibre and muscle in his back, being completely laid bare, had knives scraped

rapidly over them. Now pieces of skin and flesh came off with each successive blow, and the drummer-boy sickened at the sight and the contact, as he drew the lashes of the weapon through his hand to clear them thereof. The second twenty-five strokes were given; and again the sergeant cried, "*Halt!*"

Meanwhile several private soldiers of the regiment had fallen out of the ranks in a fainting fit at the horrible spectacle; but as soon as recovered by their comrades, they were forced to stand up again. The Colonel galloped up to each who thus fell; and as they came back to consciousness, he levelled the most brutal imprecations at their heads,—threatening to have them served in the same manner, "if they showed any more of their nonsense." But while the men were thus succumbing beneath the influence of their horrified and sickened feelings, not one of the officers exhibited the slightest emotion—unless it were old Lieutenant Heathcote; but even his good heart had been habituated, during his long years of service, to these ghastly revolting spectacles—and therefore he was at least enabled to conceal whatsoever inward emotion he might have felt.

The surgeon having again felt Lonsdale's pulse, and more water having been administered to him, the first drummer-boy resumed the cat, and the punishment progressed. It must not be thought that a repetition of the blows rendered the flesh gradually insensible to pain: there was no numbness of the kind; but each fresh stroke produced a livelier and a keener sense of excruciation. Sometimes there was a horrible tingling—then it felt as if all the cords were furnished with razors that smote edgeways upon the flesh—then as if myriads of pins, propelled by some powerful force, had shot with their points deep into the raw palpitating flesh—then as if a bunch of brambles had suddenly been pressed hard upon the back—and then again the tearing of the vulture-talons at the fibres—the scraping of the nerves with knives—the dropping of boiling oil and molten lead: these were the excruciations—varied, intense, ineffable—which the victim had to endure! Thus the punishment went on, until he had received three hundred lashes; and during the whole time he had not uttered a sound. But it was impossible even for that strong resolute-minded young man to repress the awful writhings and convulsions which seized upon him!

By this time the two drummer-boys were all covered with blood from head to foot; and there were pieces of skin and flesh adhering to their garments. Oh! it was horrible, horrible, to think that they should thus be besmeared with the gore of a fellow-creature,—horrible, most horrible, that morsels from the living man should thus be cut away to affix themselves upon their clothes! But still more horrible to look upon that back where the skin was all literally cut up and flayed off, and where the quivering muscles were laid bare amidst the raw palpitating flesh! Many of the soldiers continued to fall fainting from the ranks; but no emotion was exhibited by the officers.



Three hurried blows having been inflicted, there was a longer halt. The surgeon felt Lonsdale's pulse for some minutes in the presence of Colonel Wyndham, who had stationed himself near the triangle.

"I can endure more," said Lonsdale, in a low subdued voice: "and would rather receive at once all that is intended to give me."

"Then d—n his eyes, let him have it!" vociferated the Colonel, resolved to avenge upon the husband the humiliating rebuff he had received at the hands of the wife. "Go on, Langley."

"I don't think, sir," returned the Sergeant-major, carrying his hand to his cap, "that these two boys can do any more."

"Then let us have two fresh ones," said the Colonel, and forthwith the order was obeyed.

The punishment was resumed with strong and vigorous arms, and with fresh cats. But that point had now at length been reached when the intensity of the pain began to subside; and Lonsdale's head falling forward, he had no longer need to compress his lips or exercise any control over his feelings; for there was a sort of dull, heavy, dead numbness upon him. Yet his senses had not abandoned him: he knew what was going on, but he had not the same active power of thought as hitherto; while to the eyes of the beholders, it seemed as if the drummers were wielding their weapons against a lump of inanimate raw flesh. All traces of distinct wales had become merged into one general mass of rawness, from the nape of the neck to the waistband of the trousers, and round upon the ribs. It was one tremendous laceration, as if the whole skin had been flayed away in a piece, and then the flesh had been cut up with myriads of sharp short hacking instruments like those used in the process of cupping. Thus did the atrocious punishment progress until the end. The whole five hundred lashes were administered; and the two drummer-boys, who had succeeded the first set, retired from the scene as besmeared with blood as their predecessors.

It was done—the satanic work was over—and Lonsdale, now in a state of total unconsciousness, was borne away to the hospital—to be cured, if possible—or to die, if beyond the reach of medical aid. Thus was it that the same medical man, who disgraced and dishonored the sublime art which he professed, by consenting to attend at the infernal scene, was called upon to cure the hideous injuries which he had sanctioned, and to the infliction of which he had been a party. Sergeant Langley experienced a degree of satisfaction which was only damped by the thought that as Lonsdale had endured the entire amount of punishment at once, he would not have to be brought out again as soon as healed. But he however found a consolation in the resolve that it should not be *his* fault if the young soldier did not soon undergo another taste of the cat at the triangle. As for Colonel Wyndham and Gerald Redburn, they likewise experienced a fiendish satisfaction at the spectacle they had witnessed; and as they sipped their wine at the mess-table in the evening, they felt that

they were avenged for the rebuff which they had respectively received from Lucy.

And now, what of poor Lucy? She knew the day and the hour when the punishment was to be inflicted upon her husband: and as that hour was proclaimed by the church clocks of Portsmouth, she had locked the door of her chamber—she had fallen upon her knees by the side of the bed—and burying her face in her hands, she had put up such prayers to heaven, that, for fervor, and sincerity, and earnestness of pleading, never before ascended from the human heart. She had besought Omnipotent Providence to inspire her beloved husband with fortitude to bear his punishment, and with physical power to survive it: she had prayed, too, that this same Providence would move the hearts of those who had the authority to mitigate the amount of the chastisement. O God! who can describe that poor young woman's terrific feelings of anguish and agony as she thought to herself that, even *then*, as she knelt there, the fearful instrument of torture was lacerating, and tearing, and rending, and flaying, and all but murdering the being whom she loved most in the whole world, and to save whom the slightest pain she would cheerfully have laid down her life! As her imagination, excited almost to a frenzied pitch, followed each blow that was dealt upon her husband's back, by a sympathetic feeling it appeared as if every stripe struck at the same time upon her own heart. Very terrible was the anguish thus endured by Lucy Lonsdale: her own soul was torn, and lacerated, and rent—boiling oil and molten lead were upon her own fibres—vulture-talons fastened themselves upon her own muscles—thrills of the acutest agony shot through her from head to foot. Such was her sympathy with him whom she loved so tenderly—so adoringly—so fervently!

For two mortal hours did the unhappy young woman pass through this frightful ordeal of mental and imaginative excruciations. Fortunately, during the whole time, the child slept soundly; for she felt that if it had awakened and craved nourishment, she would not have had sufficient energy to bestow it. At length—at the expiration of those two hours—a knock was heard at her room-door: she rose from her knees to open it—and the friendly soldier's wife made her appearance. At first the good woman was startled and horrified at Lucy's aspect—so ashy pale was her countenance—so utterly woe-begone her looks—so despairing her regards! The soldier's wife came to announce that the punishment was over—that Frederick had endured it all—that he had been taken to the hospital—and that now that everything had been done to cut him to pieces, everything was being done in its turn to heal him again. Lucy gratefully thanked the woman for her kindness, but did not ask her to remain: for she wished to be alone.

Then, when once more alone, Lucy took her babe upon her knees; and weeping over it bitterly, bitterly, she murmured half aloud, "Poor child! little do you think the awful horrors which your father has this day endured, or the anguish which your mother has experienced!"

Pity is it, dear child, that you will ever exchange this blessed state of ignorance for the knowledge that there are in the world human beings of so fiend-like a character as to tie up their fellow-creatures and hcerate them almost to pieces! O Almighty God! wherefore do thy thunders sleep—why are thy lightnings at rest—when that being whom thou did'st create after thine own image, is thus barbarously maltreated by his fellow men? Oh! when I was a girl, I read in books that this was a Christian country—that we were a humane people—that we had a good paternal government—and that the spirit of the laws revolted against acts of barbarism and oppression: and I was taught, too, to regard with horror and loathing the fanatics of other times, who inflicted the tortures of the rack, the thumb-screw, the steel boot, the question by water, and the other horrors perpetrated in the Inquisition. But, oh! how strange it is for books to inculcate one set of ideas, while experience of the world stamps them with all the flagrancy of falsehood. We a humane and civilized people! and yet tolerate this horror which cries up to heaven for vengeance! No, no—we are barbarians—our Christianity is a mockery—our religion is a pretence—our laws are a delusion—and we have no right to vaunt our own humanity in contrast with the fiendish cruelty of the perished Inquisition!

As Lucy gave way to this train of musings, the glow of indignation brought back the color to her cheeks: she felt the blood boiling in her veins—her eyes flashed fire—her nostrils dilated—and she looked as if inspired by some spirit which had never existed in her before. Her confidence in human nature had received a shock: she began to see things in a new light—she felt that with an artificial system of laws and justice, there were around her the visible and tangible evidences of diabolic tyrannies. There were numerous churches in that same town of Portsmouth where she now dwelt; and from every pulpit on the Sabbath went forth teachings of humanity and forgiveness: but of all the clergymen who thus preached the divine doctrines of the Saviour—not one had been found bold and honest enough to present himself in the barrack-yard that morning and protest in the name of heaven against the satanic deed which was being committed there!

Lucy's spirit had thus flamed up for awhile after the departure of the good-natured soldier's wife; but it soon sank again to the deepest despondency; and then once more did she weep bitterly, bitterly, over the child whom she strained to her bosom. Oh! it pierces us to the quick to reflect on the harrowing anguish which that young mother—herself so innocent, so pure-minded, and so inoffensive—experienced then!—Ah, ye demon-hearted miscreants who uphold the horrors of the lash! do ye not know, reptile cowards that ye are—diabolical emissaries of Satan upon earth—cold-blooded merciless fiends—do ye not know, we ask, that the scourge which ye cause to be wielded against the back of a man, full often rebounds on the heart of a woman? Do you never

pause to reflect, detestable savages that ye are, that the murderous weapon which cuts deep into the palpitating flesh of the tied-up soldier, cuts as deeply and simultaneously too into the bosom of the soldier's wife? But no! Ye are incapable of any such humanizing reflection. And here in this moment of our burning indignation, we declare that we would sooner companionize with the fiercest of wild beasts or the most loathsome of reptiles, than remain in the society of a man who dares to avow himself an advocate of the lash. Wherever such men are found, let them be spurned from the presence of those who entertain better and more Christian feelings: let them be scorned—spit upon—treated as the vilest and most hateful of vermin! If a man advocating the lash, dares to say that he is a Christian, tell him that he lies most foully, and that Christianity itself is desecrated by the assertion! If he be a husband and a father, then pity his wife and his children: for rest assured that he is the vilest and most cold-blooded of domestic tyrants! If he be a merchant or a trader, have no opinion of his honesty: for honesty is the result of good and proper feelings—whereas there can be nothing but the most abhorrent passions agitating, like reptiles in a morass, at the bottom of the foul and fetid soul of the man who advocates the punishment of the lash! In short, heap and accumulate all the powers of language—gather together all the elements of the most fiery indignation—collect and assemble all the terrible energies of the direst aversion and the bitterest hate, to constitute one tremendous crushing anathema to heap upon the head of the monster who dares proclaim himself a supporter of the scourge?

But to return to the progress of our narrative. Some hours had passed after the visit of the good-natured soldier's wife—when Lucy, with her child in her arms, repaired to the barracks to inquire if she might be permitted to see her husband? She was told that she could not for the present—that he was progressing as well as under circumstances could be expected—and that in a few days' time she would doubtless be permitted to visit him. She dragged herself back to her lodging in the deepest, deepest despondency; and ascending to her chamber, sat down to meditate again. She did not hear the heavy footsteps of a man ascending the stairs: nor did she hear that he knocked twice at the door of her room—so completely absorbed were her thoughts in the one tremendous and terrific topic. But now the door opened; and she half started from her seat on observing a male form appear upon the threshold. It was dusk: a solitary candle burnt dimly upon the table—and as the visitor advanced slowly into the room, the feeble rays meeting his countenance, revealed to her eyes the face of her father.

An ejaculation of astonishment, not altogether unmingled with gratification, escaped her lips as the thought flashed to her mind that if he came in a friendly spirit, she would derive at least some consolation from the paternal presence.



## CHAPTER XX.

## THE SOLDIER'S WIFE.

SEVENTEEN months had elapsed since Lucy last saw her father: and during this interval he had become much altered. It was not the ordinary effect of the lapse of time upon him: but care and vexation had evidently helped to do the work. He entered the room with a slow pace and with a severe aspect,—so that as Lucy sprang from her seat and was advancing to meet him, she shrank back chilled by his looks. She did not immediately speak, for she scarcely knew what to say; and Mr. Davis, closing the door, approached a chair in which he seated himself. Then glancing round the room with a look that seemed to bid Lucy observe into what a comparatively mean condition she had brought herself, he fixed his eyes attentively upon her—but in such a manner that plainly indicated he did not choose to take any notice of the child which she held in her arms. This cold cruelty on his part was not lost upon her: her feelings as a mother were wounded in their most sensitive point—and wretched as she already was with the sense of her unfortunate husband's martyrdom, it required but this incident to draw forth her tears afresh.

"And thus we meet again, Lucy?" said her father in a deep voice. "To what have you brought yourself?"

"Am I not sufficiently unhappy without this taunt from your lips?" she asked, suddenly wiping away her tears; for she felt that her father's words conveyed a sort of slur thrown out upon the marriage which she had contracted—and her indignation was excited. "I care nothing for poverty; and as for privation, *that*, thank heaven, I have not yet known—and shall not know, as long as I have hands to work and any remnant of health to enable me to work."

"Your husband has this day——"

"Father," interrupted Lucy, with hysterical quickness, "speak not of it. No one must allude to my hearing to that circumstance, unless in the tone of sympathy; and as you feel none, I beseech you to spare my heart any additional tortures."

"Now, Lucy, do you know wherefore I have sought you out?" resumed Davis. "I heard of your husband's arrest and that he had been brought back to Portsmouth. I thought to myself that you had perhaps experienced enough of the consequences of your disobedience and your marriage; and I have undertaken this long journey to offer you a home again, if you choose to accept it."

"My home, father, is wheresoever I can live nearest to my husband; and therefore, while thanking you for your offer, I cannot accept it."

"You love your husband, then, better than your father?"

Lucy made no reply; but she bent her looks upon the child, from whose sweet countenance her parent had studiously kept away his regards.

"Surely your dream of happiness must have become dispelled by this time?" continued Mr. Davis: "and if you persist in clinging to that man who is unable to support you, you will assuredly sink down into misery—perhaps into something worse."

"Father, you dare not insult me thus!" exclaimed Lucy, her eyes flashing with indignation. "Oh! do not destroy the feeling of affection which I yet entertain toward you!"—and there was something exquisitely pathetic in the young woman's appeal.

"Affection?" echoed Davis, with a sneer. "do not talk to me of affection! Have I not suffered from your disobedience? might you not have formed a brilliant alliance? and had you followed my advice, would you not now at this moment be the wife of a gentleman and an officer—the heir to an immense fortune? Yes, you would now be the companion of ladies and gentlemen, living in comfort and splendor——"

"But, father," interrupted Lucy, "all *that* would not have constituted my happiness: for I could be happier in the meanest garret with him whom I sincerely love, than I could be in gilded saloons with one whom I loved not."

"All this sounds very fine in the page of a romance," observed Davis, sneeringly again: "but the stern realities of life cannot be colored by the roseate hues of love. I scarcely fancied, Lucy, to find you in this perverse frame of mind. I thought that you would cheerfully and gratefully accept my proposal to return home. You have left your father in solitude and loneliness, to follow the fortunes of an individual whom you know he never liked. He now comes to offer you his forgiveness, and to entreat, if you will, that you return to the place of your birth, to render the rest of his days as happy as you can. Now, Lucy, is this asking too much?"

"It is, father—because it is asking me to abandon one whom I have sworn at the altar to love and cling to, and towards whom my own heart prompts me most faithfully to keep those pledges."

"Then listen well and patiently, Lucy, to what I have to say," resumed Davis, in a voice that was bitterly implacable. "I give you this last chance. You have dashed to the ground all my fondly cherished hopes—you have annihilated the brightest dream of my existence. Nevertheless, I proffer you my pardon, on condition that you leave this man—— Ah! make not a gesture of impatience—and that you return home. But I repeat, this is the last chance. If you refuse and disobey me now, I throw you off for ever. I have already made my will, leaving all I possess away from you. Come home—and the instant you cross the threshold, that will shall be burnt before your eyes: but refuse, and it shall remain in existence that its provisions may be carried out at my death. And now observe well, Lucy—the time will come when, if you disobey me, you will be exposed to the direst privations—when you will sink down into the bitterest penury: and then you will seek that home which you now refuse! But the door will be closed against you: your letters, supplanting

assistance, will receive no answer; and you will repent—most wofully, most profoundly repent your obstinacy and perverseness of this day. Once more, therefore, do I ask you whether you will accept my proffer and accompany me back to Oakleigh? Take four-and-twenty hours to consider of it, if you will."

"I require not as many minutes—no, nor a single one!" replied Lucy. "My mind is made up, and not for worlds, however great my privations, would I abandon my husband. And here let me tell you, father, that never for a moment have I had cause to repent the step I have taken: never has a single harsh word nor an impatient look on Frederick's part taught me to regret the day that I accompanied him to the altar. You have spoken, father of what my prospects may perchance be: but do you not reflect that the time may come that *you* will repent your harshness towards your daughter? Oh! if I have indeed offended you—if I have been really and truly disobedient,—yet if ever there were a time when a daughter might expect to receive her parent's forgiveness, it is now that my heart is bleeding with painful wounds, and that my soul is tortured with terrible excruciations. If ever there were a time, I repeat, when a father should be moved to take pity on his daughter—to soothe and console her—to breathe the words of parental kindness in her ears—this is the moment, and you are the father who should manifest that sympathy!"

Stern and unmoved by this piteous, pathetic appeal, Davis rose slowly from his seat; when Lucy, anguished at the idea that her father should leave her thus, fell upon her knees at his feet—and holding up her child towards him, exclaimed, "One kind word—Oh! but one kind word, ere you leave me—for this dear infant's sake!"

"Lucy, it is the child of the man that I hate more than any other man in the world," said Davis, sternly.

"But it is my child—your daughter's child! it is your grandchild!" exclaimed the half-distracted young woman.

"Return home, and I acknowledge my grandchild," was the bailiff's response: "but persist in your refusal, and I acknowledge it not."

"Oh! it is impossible that you can be so harsh!" cried Lucy. "Look at this dear child—it has not offended you: and it is cruel—oh, it is cruel, to visit your wrath upon it!"

"For the last time, Lucy, will you come?"

"No, father—I cannot."

"Then I throw you off for ever—I discard you—I leave my curse behind me!"

"Oh, God! he has cursed me—my own father has cursed me!" shrieked forth the wretched Lucy: and she fell back senseless upon the floor.

When she returned to consciousness, her father was gone, and the babe was crying by her side. It was its piteous wail that had brought the mother back to life. Snatching the dear infant to her bosom—at this moment her only consolation—Lucy wept over it long and plentifully. Her father's curse still rang in her ears; and it lay like a weight of lead upon her heart, terrible to bear.

Early on the following morning the young mother, with the child in her arms, repaired to the barracks to inquire after her husband. She learnt that he was doing well: and this was at least some consolation. Day after day, for the next fortnight, did she present herself regularly at an early hour to make the same inquiry; and it was a source of infinite relief to her wounded feelings to receive good accounts on each occasion. At length she was admitted to an interview with her husband. Good heavens, how altered was he! Pale, thin, and emaciated—looking like the ghost of his former self—it seemed as if all vigorous vitality had been lacerated out of him by the atrocious weapon. Lucy was fearfully shocked; and with convulsive sobbing did she sink into his arms. He strained her to his breast: and then he lavished his caresses upon his child: then he embraced his wife again—and then he once more took little Frederick in his arms and showered his endearments upon him. But all this while, though testifying unabated fondness for these dear objects, not a tear dimmed Lonsdale's eye; and when the first paroxysm of joy was passed at meeting them, he became thoughtful and abstracted. Lucy, always accustomed to deal with the utmost frankness towards her husband, told him of the visit which she had received from her father; and when Frederick understood how resolutely she had rejected Mr. Davis's proposal to return home, he gazed at her with unspeakable fondness. Still there was something in his look and manner which did Lucy harm to contemplate: for she saw that some change had assuredly been wrought within him. It was not a change in respect to herself or their child: for nothing could exceed Frederick's tenderness or devotion towards them both; but it was a change in respect to himself,—as if he had lost all confidence in the world, and brooded darkly and ominously over his wrongs and his sorrows. Lucy, however, did not question him directly upon the subject: she thought that the impression would gradually wear off; and she hoped at future interviews to observe a change for the better. Indeed, she delicately avoided the slightest allusion to the subject of his punishment; but by the earnest tenderness and endearing caresses which she testified, the excellent wife endeavored to infuse solace into his soul.

Frederick remained six weeks in the hospital before he was reported fit for service again. Every day after that first interview, was Lucy permitted to see him; but it was with continued pain and sorrow she still noticed that gloomy brooding on his part—those intervals of abstraction—and that change which had evidently taken place in the former healthy tone of his mind. Still, however, she said nothing: for now she buoyed herself up with the hope that when once he should be able to get out again, fresh air, exercise, his military avocations, and the leisure hours he might be enabled to spend with herself and his child, would produce a salutary effect upon him.

On the first day that Lonsdale quitted the hospital, he and Lucy had a serious conversa-



tion relative to the means by which she herself was to obtain a subsistence. During the two months which by this time had elapsed since their removal from Carlisle, she had lived with the utmost economy and frugality; but still the little store of money they had in their possession at the time was disappearing and if Lucy had not already taken some steps to earn her livelihood, it was because so long as her husband was in the hospital she had not the heart nor the courage to think of any thing but him. Now, however, that he was once more at large, they discussed the matter together; and Lucy intimated her intention of seeking needle-work, as she had done when they were first at Carlisle. We should observe that, although accustomed to display the most undisguised frankness towards her husband, she did not think it right to inform him of the conduct of Colonel Wyndham, nor the insulting behavior of Gerald Redburn: for she was alarmed lest his manly spirit should prompt him to resent against those two officers the indignities they had offered to his wife, and thus inevitably draw down upon himself some signal manifestations of their vindictiveness.

On the day following the conference with Frederick, Lucy intimated to her landlady that she wished to procure needlework, and asked her assistance. Very different was the conduct of this woman from that of worthy Mrs. Harrison, at Carlisle. She merely gave Lucy a few general hints, without making the slightest proffer to forward her views. Indeed, she did not appear over well pleased with the application,—thinking probably that her rent was no longer safe, if her lodger's circumstances were so precarious.

The suggestions which the landlady had thrown out were merely to the effect that Lucy might, perhaps, obtain work from certain shops the addresses of which she named; and the young woman lost no time in applying in those quarters. She was offered work from a slopseller, provided she could deposit five pounds as a safe return of the materials when duly made up. This sum Mrs. Lonsdale was speedily enabled to raise, having a portion by her, and by pledging some of her jewellery. It was her first visit to the pawnbroker's; and though she experienced a sense of shame on entering the establishment, yet she parted from her trinkets without a pang, because she felt that it was to ensure the means of subsistence through her own honest industry. She took the five pounds to the slopseller, and received a quantity of work, with which she hurried home and to which she at once sat down. When Frederick presently visited her, she told him what she had done. He embraced her with all his wonted affection, but gently chided her for having parted with her own things in preference to his watch, which had remained in her possession. However, it was no harsh word that he spoke—but merely an affectionate remonstrance, and which Lucy accordingly received as a proof of kindness on his part. At the end of a week, when she took her work back, she received fifteen shillings for what she had done: for he it observed that at the time

of which we are writing, this kind of work was ten times better paid than it is at the present day. The slopseller was well pleased at the neatness with which it was executed, and offered her some work of a superior character, which she at once accepted; and the second week her earnings amounted to very nearly a pound. Thus hope once more glimmered up in the bosom of poor Lucy; and all cares relative to subsistence being thus banished—at least for the present—some little alleviation was experienced for her sorrows. Still her happiness would have been greater, could she have seen that Frederick was the same being he formerly was. To her and her little son he was still the same in all his devoted fondness,—passing his leisure time entirely at his wife's lodging, walking out with her of an evening when it was fine, or else reading to her as she sat at work. But often would he fall into those moods of abstraction and those deep broodings from which she had hoped that he would be weaned when restored to health. There were times, too, when he had a strange look, the thought of which often troubled her when she was alone, and haunted her occasionally in her dreams,—a look that seemed to imply the deep sense that his were wrongs which craved vengeance, and that he would be revenged if he had an opportunity. Still she never questioned him upon the subject: and still likewise she went on hoping that all this would wear off in the course of time.

She seldom stirred out of her room except when accompanied by her husband: for she had on two or three occasions met Colonel Wyndham and Gerald Redburn, who had looked at her with a supercilious impertinence; and she trembled at the idea of fresh insults from their hands—the more so that if they were offered, she dared not tell them to her husband. She had also met Sergeant Langley, who had flung upon her a malignant glance as he stalked pompously by; and though she did not fear at his hands the same species of indignity which she had too much reason to apprehend on the part of the two unprincipled officers above-mentioned, yet it did her harm to encounter the man who had shown himself so bitterly hostile to her husband.

Time passed on—months elapsed—and a comparative degree of happiness reigned at the little lodging. The child thrived apace, and was now able to toddle about from chair to chair. Lucy's earnings averaged eighteen shillings a-week; and every evening she enjoyed Frederick's presence at the neatly spread little tea-table. The private soldiers are only allowed in the barracks breakfast and dinner: there is no provision for either tea or supper; and thus it was Lucy's satisfaction and joy to be enabled to provide a comfortable meal for her husband. Oft-times would he deplore the circumstances of his position, which prevented him from doing anything towards contributing to the little domestic resources: for he had but tenpence half-penny a-week out of his pay in the form of pocket-money. This however he did not expend at the canteen or the public-house, but laid it out in the hire of books,

which he read aloud to Lucy when she was working of an evening. He had at first thought of devoting his leisure hours to a little school, if he could get one together; but there were several reasons wherefore, on maturer reflection, this project had to be abandoned. In the first place there would be an objection on the part of parents to send their children to receive tuition at the hands of a private soldier. Secondly, even if this were not the case, there would be so many interruptions when it was his turn to be on guard, or when there was any extra duty to be performed;—and thirdly, he could not find enough time each day to impart the sufficient amount of instruction to school-boys. The plan, therefore, having been well talked over by him and Lucy, was rejected, and thus he was enabled to do nothing towards assisting in the expenses at the little lodging. It often galled him sadly to think that he should in any way encroach upon his wife's earnings, even for the evening meals which he shared with her; but if ever he alluded to the subject, it caused Lucy so much pain and threw such a damp upon her spirits, that he invariably regretted having expressed his feelings upon the topic: and thus he soon ceased from any allusion thereto. In respect to his position in the regiment, we need only observe that he was most regular and careful in the performance of his duties, being resolved to afford his enemies no opportunity, by any dereliction on his part, for direct persecution.

Thus did the time pass on; and Christmas came again. It was the rule in the regiment that those soldiers happening to have friends or relations in the town, who would invite them to dinner on that day, obtained leave of absence after morning service; and thus it was agreed, in compliance with Lucy's entreaty, that Frederick should avail himself of the permission so generally accorded. With mingled feelings did she make her preparations. It was in one sense a sort of pleasure that they should dine together on this day of universal festivity: but on the other hand she could not help thinking of the mournful apprehensions and presentiment misgivings amongst which they had eaten their last Christmas dinner together, the extortion of Bates having taken place, as the reader will remember, on the previous evening. This made her reflect that if it had not been for the inauspicious appearance of that man at Carlisle, they might still be dwelling in happiness there at the present time; and the fearful indignity which her husband had endured by the lacerations of the scourge, would not have taken place. Nevertheless, Lucy was more inclined on the present occasion to yield herself up to hopeful thoughts than to desponding ones; and when Frederick made his appearance at one o'clock on Christmas Day, he not only found a nicely spread table awaiting him, but also a beautiful wife welcoming him with the tenderest and fondest smiles. Then, whatever was harbouring in his soul, was for the time forgotten; he embraced Lucy—he fondled his wife—and they were all happy together. After dinner they walked out; and it was with an unfeigned joy that Lucy

perceived that her husband was in much better spirits than he had been ever since the terrible punishment he had received.

When they parted in the evening, Frederick turned back from the threshold which he had already crossed; and again pressing Lucy in his arms, he said in a low tender voice "My dearest wife, I am afraid you have sometimes seen me abstracted and mournful: but it was no easy task to surmount all of a sudden a goading sense of the bitter wrongs I had endured. To-day I have experienced such true happiness that it seems as if it were the era of a more healthful change in my feelings. Good night, dearest."

He departed with the warmth of Lucy's kisses upon his cheeks; and the fond adoring wife slept that night the sleep of happiness.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### ANOTHER CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

THREE more months passed away; and during this interval Frederick appeared fully to carry out the parting promise he had made to Lucy on Christmas day. He seemed to have recovered his former spirits—or at all events to wrestle so successfully against whatsoever sense of wrong and humiliation might still linger in his breast, that no reflection thereof appeared upon his features. Lucy was now indeed as happy as under all circumstances she could hope to be: for that the full measure of unalloyed felicity would ever again be her's in this world, was not to be hoped for. The mark of the lash was on her husband's back, and was seared as indelibly on her own heart; the wound on the back and the wound on the heart were healed—but still they were tender, and the least touch made them smart. Lonsdale had regained all the outward appearances of health: but there were times when he experienced a pain in the lungs, as if he had received some internal injury from the frightful chastisement. But never did he breathe a word in Lucy's ear relative to these sensations: he could not however avoid fancying at times that in the long run his life would be abridged by the effects of the diabolic torture.

Three months, we say, had passed since the happy Christmas they had spent together,—when one morning the sloop-seller for whom Lucy worked, sent a message to her lodging, requesting that she would come to him at once. She accordingly hastened thither, with her little Freddy, now upwards of eighteen months old; and found that her employer, having an order suddenly sent in for some work requiring great care, wished to place in her hands as much thereof as she could undertake to complete in a given time. Lucy accepted the task, and hastened back homeward. As she entered the street where she dwelt, she suddenly found herself face to face with Gerald Redburn.

"Ah, Lucy!" he exclaimed, stopping short as literally to bar her way: "it's a long time since you and I met. How well you are look-



ing, to be sure! Upon my soul you grow handsomer than ever!"

Lucy was endeavouring to pass by the impudent coxcomb, — when hastily glancing around, and perceiving that they were unobserved, the street being a secluded one, he caught her by the hand and holding it fast, said, "Come, my dear Lucy, you must be tired of that soldier chap of yours. Put yourself under my protection, and I will make a lady of you."

"Unhand me, sir!" exclaimed Mrs. Lonsdale indignantly: and she struggled hard to escape from him.

"No, by heaven! we don't part like this," he cried. "You know I have long loved you. I must and will have a chat with you now."

But Lucy succeeded in bursting away from him, and hurried home, the frightened child crying bitterly. She ascended to her chamber, and for a considerable time was unable to compose her feelings sufficiently to commence the work she had undertaken, and which was required in such a hurry. Her bosom swelled with indignation at the treatment she had received — a treatment, too, which she had no means of resenting; for she dared not communicate it to her husband on account of the motives already specified. At length, however, she smothered her excitement as well as she was able, and set to work.

Meanwhile Gerald Redburn, who, we should observe, had recently obtained by purchase the rank of lieutenant in the regiment, had, through this little incident, ascertained Lucy's abode; and he resolved to profit by the discovery. Whatever real love he might have experienced for her at the time when in his blind infatuation he would have married her, had long since subsided; and now that he was better acquainted with the world, he often thought what an idiot he was to have ever thought of making her his wife. That same experience had moreover opened his eyes to the craftiness which Davis had pursued towards him. As a matter of course the flight of Lucy from Coventry and her subsequent marriage with Lonsdale had at the time fully convinced him that he had never possessed her love, but that her present husband had indeed always been the object thereof. He had never adopted any means to punish Davis for the artifices so cunningly set to ensnare him into a marriage with his daughter; because by so doing the whole affair would have come to the knowledge of his parents. Thus was it that the matter still remained unsuspected in that quarter. When Davis had visited Portsmouth for the purpose of seeing Lucy, he had not attempted to obtain an interview with Gerald; and thus the young gentleman had no opportunity of learning from him where Lucy dwelt. She lived in such seclusion that her address was generally unknown amongst her husband's comrades; and thus was it that until the present occasion of which we are speaking, Gerald had remained in ignorance thereof.

But if the infatuation of love had so completely passed away from Lieutenant Redburn's heart, he nevertheless experienced the strong

sensuality of passion in respect to Lucy. Her extreme loveliness could not fail to keep this grosser feeling alive in the breast of the profligate Redburn; and as he had never seen her look handsomer than she did when he met her in the street as just described, passion flamed up in his breast with the fiercest fires. Depraved and unprincipled as he himself was, he could scarcely believe in the existence of real virtue on the part of a private soldier's wife: he thought that the manner in which she had thus treated him, was the result of the lingering of an embittered feeling, on account of the past, and which might easily be overcome by cajolery and coaxing. In short, he flattered himself that if he seriously set about the conquest, he could scarcely fail to achieve it. Upon this campaign he resolved to enter; and being now acquainted with her abode, he thought it needless to waste time in undertaking the enterprise.

When parade was over, Gerald dressed himself in plain clothes, and proceeded to the house where Mrs. Lonsdale dwelt. The landlady opened the door to his summons; and a five shilling piece slipped into her hand, elicited the information that Lucy's husband was not with her at the moment. He accordingly ascended the stairs to her chamber; and the landlady, who had hitherto thought that Lucy was a most discreet and virtuous young woman, muttered to herself, "Well, after all, she's no better than the generality of them."

Meanwhile Redburn had reached the door of Lucy's chamber, at which he knocked. He had ascended so gently that she had not heard his footsteps; and conceiving it to be the landlady, said, "Come in."

He at once obeyed the invitation; and Lucy, flinging down the work, started up amazed and indignant at the outrageous insolence of this intrusion.

"Now, my dear Mrs. Lonsdale," said Gerald, shutting the door, "pray don't put yourself in a passion: for I can assure you that I wish to speak to you very seriously indeed;" — and as he thus commenced what he considered to be breaking the ice, he was well satisfied to observe that the child was sleeping soundly on the bed.

"Understand me well, Mr. Redburn!" said Lucy, whose cheeks, from being flushed with indignation, had become ashy pale at the cruel sense of her position; but she spoke with accentuated firmness. "I do not wish that a disturbance shall be created in the house. If such were the case, my husband would not fail to hear of it; and indeed I expect him here every moment. I am well aware, if he were to testify his resentment towards you, that as his officer, you would not fail to find the means of a bitter vengeance. But do not for an instant suppose me capable of a dishonoring deed. Frankly and firmly I tell you that I would sooner perish than stoop to infamy. Whatever wild hope may therefore have brought you hither, may be discarded from your mind at once. And now, sir, that I have restrained myself thus far to make you understand everything, I enjoin you to depart."

"But, Lucy, this is really too ridiculous—"

"Begone, sir! or you will compel me to summon assistance."

"No, no—you will not make such a fool of yourself."

"Mr. Redburn, for the last time I command you to be gone. At any risk, I will not for another instant tolerate your presence. I will alarm the house!"

"Nonsense, Lucy! you are too good for a soldier's wife; and as I told you just now, I will make a lady of you."

"This is too much!" ejaculated Lucy: and she sprang towards the door.

"By heaven you are superbly handsome!" cried Gerald, maddened with passion; and he threw his arms round her waist.

She struggled against him, and succeeded in escaping from his hold; then tearing open the door, she screamed for assistance. But at the same instant her husband came rushing up the staircase; and bursting into the room, comprehended it all at once.

"Begone, sir—depart hence!" he exclaimed, in a furious passion: "or all officer though you be, I will kick you ignominiously down the stairs."

"Do you know, fellow, to whom you are talking?" demanded Gerald, drawing himself up with matchless effrontery.

"Yes—to an unprincipled scoundrel!" replied Frederick; and clenching his fist, he quickly added, "Begone, sir—or I shall cease to be master of myself."

"You shall smart for this, you rascal!" ejaculated Redburn; but fearful of summary chastisement, he hastened down the stairs; and by the threats which he kept on muttering as he passed by the landlady, she was made completely to comprehend that her transitory suspicion of Lucy's impropriety was utterly unfounded.

"O Frederick!" cried Lucy, flinging herself into her husband's arms the moment Gerald had left the room; "what will be the consequence of this? Have you laid yourself open to anything he may do?"—and there was mortal anguish in her voice and looks.

"There can be no immediate consequences, dearest Lucy," replied Lonsdale, "because he dares not make known what has taken place. Compose yourself."

"Oh! it is you that must compose yourself, my beloved husband; for I perceive that you are much agitated."

"O Lucy, is it not sufficient to drive us to despair?" exclaimed Frederick, dashing his open palm forcibly against his forehead. "To think that this villain should dare violate the sanctity of your chamber—and that I am at the mercy of a wretch such as he! Oh, the accursed shackles which I feel fastened upon every limb!—scarcely able to protect my own beloved wife from outrage and insult!"

"Frederick, dear Frederick—for heaven's sake calm this terrible excitement!"—and Lucy lavished upon him the tenderest caresses. "There!" she suddenly ejaculated, snatching up their child who had waked up; and bringing the boy to its father, she added, "For the

sake of this dear innocent, I beseech you to calm yourself!"

"I will, I will, Lucy," he responded, sitting down and taking his son upon his knees. "But now, tell me all that occurred."

Lucy at once frankly told her husband how she had met Gerald Redburn at about nine o'clock in the morning—what he had said to her—how he had just now penetrated to her chamber—and what had then taken place. While she spoke, she saw that Lonsdale left off fondling the child—that a dark cloud lowered over his features—that his brows became knit, his lips compressed, and his whole form quivering with a spasmodic sensation. Again did she beseech and implore that he would calm his excitement, both for her sake and that of his son. He promised that he would; but for the rest of the time they were together that day, she could not help noticing that his looks frequently assumed that ominous aspect which had been wont to terrify her, and that he likewise relapsed into his old fits of moody abstraction. She slept but little during the night that followed; for there was now once again a presentiment of approaching evil in poor Lucy's heart.

Several weeks elapsed after this incident, without any other worthy of narration. But Frederick had lost his good spirits again. Oftener and oftener came back the cloud to his countenance: more frequently did his moods of abstraction return. Lucy grew more and more alarmed; and she resolved at length to speak to him very seriously on the subject.

"My dearest husband," she said one day, placing herself upon his knee, and throwing her arm round his neck: "there is something preying upon your mind. Do make me your confidante."

"Oh, Lucy!" he cried, with a sudden outburst of excitement, as if feelings long pent up now forced for themselves an issue; "I have endeavored as much as possible to keep my sorrows from you—but I can conceal them no longer!"

"What do you mean, Frederick?" asked Lucy, frightened and dismayed.

"I mean, my beloved wife, that I am enduring in my regiment the tortures of perdition: I mean that I am subjected to such a series of persecutions from the young fiend Redburn, that my patience is exhausted! Whenever I happen to cross his path and no one else is nigh, he mutters '*Dog*,' or '*Scoundrel*,' or flings at me some other goading taunt. When on guard, if he be the officer on duty, everything is wrong with me. I am slovenly—or I am unsoldier-like—or I am not quick enough in my movements—But heaven only knows the thousand and one petty tyrannies that I have to endure! I feel that I shall go mad, Lucy—I shall go mad!"

"Oh! my dearest husband, for heaven's sake tranquillize yourself!"—and the affectionate wife put into requisition all her tenderest endearments and most winning ways to soothe Frederick's excitement.

"You are an angel, my beloved!" he said, straining her to his breast: "but not even as



angel can teach me to endure these wrongs with patience. And now listen to me seriously, Lucy. After I received that frightful punishment, my mind became morbid, and I cherished the darkest thoughts of vengeance.—Do not interrupt me, dearest, but listen. Yes—vengeance against the author of all our sorrows, that miscreant Bates! But gradually, under the influence of your love—your smiles—your bright and beautiful example of Christian resignation—my soul recovered its wonted healthfulness, and I was saved from those dark thoughts. You remember what I said to you on the night of Christmas Day, when we parted? I then felt like a man cured of a passing madness, or rather a gloomy mania. All went well until that incident with Gerald Redburn: but thenceforth my mind lost its healthy tone again—and it has been with difficulty that I have at times escaped from the strange and terrible thoughts that have risen like spirits of evil in my soul. I am now being driven by slow but sure degrees to frenzy. Redburn is bent upon my destruction. And what is worst of all, I have no redress! There is nothing in his conduct towards me that I can actually complain of. And if I did complain, to whom would it be? To the Colonel, who is his friend, and who would take his part! Besides, the idea of a private soldier complaining against an officer, is ridiculous, absurd, preposterous!”—and Frederick spoke with an exceeding bitterness.

The reader may conjecture with what feelings of anguish poor Lucy heard her husband's explanation, every detail of which was but too well corroborated by that increasing moodiness on his part which she had lately noticed. What could she do? what could she say? what could she suggest? Her only resource was to soothe him with the gentlest ministrations of that kindness which a loving woman knows so well how to pour forth, but which, alas! have not always the effect of healing the bruised spirit. His excitement was calmed down; but still the sense of his goading wrongs remained—and the unfortunate husband and wife were compelled to look once more with apprehension and dismay into the future.

Several weeks glided by, and day after day did Lonsdale's position in his regiment become more intolerable. Desperate was the struggle which the unhappy man maintained within himself to keep his sorrows veiled as much as possible from the knowledge of Lucy: but the penetrating eyes of a fond and loving wife were not to be thus baffled—and our afflicted heroine saw that matters were approaching some dangerous crisis, which she trembled to think of. And now again, as was the case at Carlisle after the appearance of Bates in that town, Frederick and Lucy began to observe that a marked change was taking place in each other,—he growing haggard and care-worn—she becoming pale and sickly,—his soul sinking into frequent fits of despondency, her spirits kept up by efforts painfully visible. At length they mutually felt that they could no longer keep silence upon the subject, although they had endeavored to do so; and one day their eyes sud-

denly meeting, when each was stealing a glance at the other, they read what was passing identically and simultaneously within their souls.

“You are very unhappy, Lucy?” said Frederick, in a mournful voice.

“And you, my beloved husband, are still more so,” she replied: then she endeavored to smile in order to cheer him—but it was a sickly attempt; and feeling that it was so, she burst into tears.

“Do not weep, dearest,” he said: “I cannot endure to see those eyes dimmed with tears. Every drop that falls thus upon your cheeks, dear Lucy, seems to be molten lead poured upon my own heart.”

“But what must we do, Frederick?” she asked, with a shudder of anguish: “for it is impossible that you can exist longer thus. Tyranny is killing you by inches!”

“Ah! that is indeed the fatal truth!” he ejaculated, with a vehement outburst of excitement. “By heaven, I can endure it no longer! I have gone through more within the last few months than any man living would have put up with. Were I unmarried, and did not your image and that of our beloved child constantly rise up before me, I should long ago have struck that fiend-like tyrant Redburn, and what I tremble at, dear Lucy—what I shudder to think of—and yet what I foresee to be inevitable—is that some day, when goaded to desperation, I shall strike that man; and you know what the punishment is for striking an officer—it is *death*!”

Lucy gave a quick start, shocked to the uttermost confines of her being by this terrific announcement; and pale as a statue, she gazed upon her husband in a half wild, half vacant dismay. Then in a sudden paroxysm of ineffable anguish, she threw herself upon his breast, weeping bitterly. For a few moments all her power of self-command vanished; and she murmured, amidst rending sobs, “Oh, your enemies will kill you! they will murder you! they are bent upon your destruction! What is to be done, dearest Frederick? what is to be done? Something quickly! It is impossible that you could incur this frightful risk any longer.”

Lonsdale looked hard at his wife for nearly a minute, evidently having something in his mind that he wished to say, but to which he scarcely dared give utterance; then with a sudden mustering up of all his courage, he responded in a deep hollow voice, “Lucy, to avoid striking a blow the penalty of which is death, we must flee—I must desert!”

Lucy started not—neither did she shudder: for she was prepared for this announcement. She herself saw indeed that it was the only alternative. The crisis was involved in the two words, *death* or *desertion*. And, Oh! to behold her husband withdrawn from the certainty of committing himself in a manner that should hurry him to the grave, even though he must become a deserter a second time, was fraught with hope and happiness!

“Yes, Frederick,” she murmured: “I am afraid that this indeed is now necessary!”

“And you, my sweet wife,” he whispered, glancing with apprehension around, as if the

very walia had ears for such a conversation as this,—“and you will make up your mind to dare whatsoever fatigues must be encountered—whatsoever struggles we have to endure, in establishing a position elsewhere?”

“I can make up my mind to anything so long as we are together,” replied Lucy, fixing upon him a look of the tenderest devotion: then in a very low whispering voice, she went on to say, “Is it not somewhat singular, dearest, that you should be about to take this step almost at the very same date that you did so before—just three years back?”

“Yes—it is strange,” ejaculated Frederick, now struck by the coincidence. “This is the twenty-second of August—it was on the twenty-fourth that I fled on the last occasion. But you do not consider that there is anything ominous in this?”

“Oh, no, no! I am not so weak-minded. It was merely a passing thought that occurred to me. Let us think no more of it.”

The husband and wife thereupon began seriously to discuss the plan of their proceedings. Lucy's industry had enabled her to save a few pounds: the jewellery which she had pledged had been redeemed from the pawnbroker—and moreover there was a deposit of five pounds which she could claim back from the slopseller. Altogether, in money they could command about twelve pounds; and in case of need they could safely reckon on as much more by making their personal property available. The means of flight were not therefore wanting; and now the question arose whether should they go? where should they establish themselves? This point was discussed long and seriously: but at length for several reasons, it was determined that they should proceed to London and fix themselves there—for Frederick calculated that in the mass of the multitudinous metropolis, it was far more easy for him to lose his identity, as it were, than in any of the cities and towns of the provinces, however remote from Portsmouth or from the Midland Counties they might be. Lucy coincided with these views; and it was resolved to lose no time in carrying their project into execution. When their minds were thus made up, they both became more tranquil; and Frederick, indeed, soon displayed such an elevation of spirits and talked so hopefully of the future, that his affectionate wife was speedily led to contemplate with a real pleasure the intended change in their circumstances.

The next evening was decided upon as the one on which the flight was to be accomplished. Accordingly, on the following day after the resolve was thus seriously and deliberately come to, Lucy proceeded to the slopseller's, gave back such work as she had in hand, and received whatsoever little money was due to her, together with the five pounds which had remained in his hands as deposit. It was not necessary to expend any of her money in plain clothes for her husband—inasmuch as he was well provided with garments when they had quitted Carlisle, and his Sunday suit had remained since then carefully stowed away in one of her boxes. This suit she now brought

forth—brushed it carefully—and felt a thrill of pleasure at the thought that it was the emblem of that freedom which he was about to seek, in contra-distinction to the uniform which, as the badge of slavery, he was about to put off. To her landlord and landlady an intimation was given that circumstances had transpired which rendered her removal necessary; and as she had merely hired her room by the week, it was but a week's rent which she had to sacrifice through the brevity of this notice. When Frederick made his appearance at the usual hour, she at once saw by his looks that his purpose continued the same; and she quickly gave him to understand that her own preparations were complete.

When dusk arrived, Frederick went back to the barracks to appear at the evening muster; and Lucy then called in a porter, who took her boxes down to the Point—a famous embarkation place at Portsmouth. She entered a wherry, with her little Frederick, and, the luggage being put in, she was speedily rowed across to Gosport, which is on the opposite side of the bay forming Portsmouth harbor. There she proceeded to a public-house which her husband had named to her; and in about half-an-hour he joined her at this rendezvous. His suit of plain clothes had been kept out of her boxes, and was done up in a separate parcel ready for immediate use. He took it and went away, it being previously agreed that the next place of meeting should be at the coach-office in about an hour, which would make it half-past ten o'clock, when a night-stage left for London. During his absence, Lucy proceeded to the office and secured two places on the outside of the vehicle: for as it was a beautiful night and the weather was exceedingly warm, they had resolved to travel thus in order to economise their funds as much as possible. Nothing was demanded for little Freddy, as he would sit upon his parents' knees by turns.

Meanwhile Frederick Lonsdale had proceeded along the shore of the harbor to a very secluded spot, and there he changed his clothes. His uniform he wrapped up in a bundle, together with a large stone to sink it; and then threw it into the water. At the appointed time he met Lucy at the coach-office. They took their places, little Freddy being well wrapped up—the vehicle started—and the lights of Gosport were soon left far behind.

Our travellers reached London, without any misadventure, soon after seven in the morning; and in the course of the day they were installed in a comfortable little lodging in the neighborhood of Finsbury Square. Thus was successfully accomplished Frederick Lonsdale's second desertion from his regiment.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE DESERTER'S PROGRESS.

If we were to enter into details respecting this new epoch in the career of our hero and heroine, it would be but a work of supererogation in respect to what had passed during the *previous*



perous portion of their residence at Carlisle. They now adopted the fictitious name of Robinson, under which Frederick opened a little school, while Lucy again took in needlework. They endured no embarrassments in a pecuniary sense, and experienced but a small amount of up-hill work in establishing their new position. The frank-hearted unassuming manners of Frederick won him the confidence of the parents of his pupils; while the modesty and amiability, together with the great beauty of his wife, engaged the interest of those ladies who, in Finsbury Square and its neighborhood, entrusted her with work. At first they did not stir out more than was absolutely necessary for the purpose of exercise, and to call on their patrons and patronesses; for Frederick had not failed to read in the newspapers the offer of a reward for his apprehension as a deserter, together with a minute description of his personal appearance. But inasmuch as when he had quitted the regiment his hair was cropped short and he wore whiskers, he had immediately on his arrival in London, shaven off the whiskers—and as in a few weeks his hair grew long, these little changes helped to destroy his identity with the too truthful description given in the advertisement. Such advertisements seldom meet the eyes of those who are not more or less concerned in looking for them; and thus, in the neighborhood where the Lonsdales had taken up their quarters, there was not a soul who entertained the slightest suspicion at all prejudicial to our hero's interests.

Time wore on—weeks swelled into months, months swelled into years, and thus did three of those growing years pass away from the date of Frederick's second desertion. He was now twenty-eight; Lucy was twenty-six, and she appeared to be in all the bloom of ripe womanhood's glorious beauty. Her charms had expanded into a certain degree of *embonpoint*, which, without at all marring the admirable symmetry of her proportions, rendered her not merely a handsome but also a very fine woman. Little Frederick, now nearly five years old, was a thriving and beautiful boy, combining in his countenance, so far as a child of that age could, the manly features of his father with the more delicate traits and softly ingenuous looks of his mother. A finer couple, with a finer pledge of their affection, was not to be found throughout the whole neighborhood where they lived.

In a pecuniary sense they were prosperous. They now occupied a small house for which they obtained a lease: they had purchased their own furniture—the school consisted of numerous day-pupils—and Lucy was not compelled to toil with her needle more than she chose. Indeed, Frederick would not permit her to devote to her work as much time as if left to her own inclination she would have done; but he often said as he embraced her affectionately, "I never shall forget, dearest Lucy, that when we were at Portsmouth, all the toil fell to your share, and I could do nothing to assist in contributing to our little resources *then*. But *now* it is different—and you must permit my labors to be the chief

source of our maintenance. I love those beautiful eyes too much to permit you to stand the chance of dimming their lustre by too sedulous an attention to your needle, and therefore you must not do more than will contribute to your amusement."

The marriage-life has never beheld so bright and beautiful an example of tender, earnest, and devoted love as that which subsisted between Frederick and Lucy. Six years had they now been united in matrimonial bonds; but these bonds were silken ones which they were joyful and proud to wear; or they might even more properly be called links of the choicest and sweetest flowers festooning around their hearts. During these six years not a harsh word, far less an angry one—not a dark look, far less a wrathful one—had ever passed between them. Not only in the fulness of their love, but also the strange and eventful circumstances of their married life, did they feel themselves so bound up the one with the other, that all their tastes, their thoughts, and their experiences constituted a remarkable identity. Frederick's home being so completely happy, and the felicity that his beautiful wife shed around her being so unalloyed, he never wished to seek for amusement or recreation elsewhere: he never thought of pursuing a pleasure in which she could not share. Their recreations, too, were of a domestic character. They walked out together invariably accompanied by their beloved and only child; and of an evening Frederick would sit reading aloud to his wife while she was engaged with her needle. Or else she would help little Frederick to prepare his lessons for the morrow, while her husband taught himself French and Latin, in both of which languages he was acquiring a rapid proficiency. They had but few friends with whom they were on visiting footing; for these had been selected with care and discrimination: but occasionally did they receive those friends at their house to form a little evening party; and occasionally too did the Lonsdales visit them in a similar manner. Thus did time pass on; and were it not that they both alike knew that in the chapter of accidents there was always the risk of the *one* dread discovery being made, they would have experienced a happiness as complete as mortals could possibly know. It must not however be thought that the felicity they did enjoy was very seriously troubled by that apprehension; for it is a characteristic of human nature to become confiding and trustful in that position which by the lapse of time appears to have settled its basis on security.

Lonsdale had not failed to keep an eye upon those newspapers which specially recorded the movements of the army. The regiment to which he properly belonged had recently been removed from Portsmouth to Manchester—a place that was still farther remote from London. Colonel Wyndham still remained in command; and Gerald Redburn had risen to the rank of Captain—as a matter of course by purchase; while poor old Lieutenant Heathcote remained a lieutenant still. Mr. Scott continued to officiate as Adjutant; but Captain

Courtenay had "sold out" some eight or ten months after Frederick's desertion. Our hero had little doubt that the captain had been at length driven by his extravagance to this step. Such were the particulars he had gleaned from time to time. In respect to Lucy's father no information had been obtained; and it was not therefore known whether he was alive or dead. Our heroine often thought to herself that it would be a source of satisfaction to communicate with him: but this she dared not do. A letter, although posted from any town distant from London, might, if her father were rancorously disposed towards her husband, lead to researches being made; and therefore she was compelled to remain perfectly quiet in this respect. As for Bates the village-barber, and everybody else at Oakleigh with whom they were acquainted, or of whom they had any reason to think about, the Lonsdales were equally in the dark concerning them and their affairs.

One day, at the expiration of the three years during which our little family had now been settled in London, Frederick had some business to transact in Aldersgate Street with the father of one of his pupils; and on returning from that house he passed through the hall of the General Post-Office in St. Martin's-le-Grand, which (for the benefit of country readers unacquainted with London) we may as well observe constitutes a thoroughfare for those who choose to avail themselves of it. Being in the direction which Lonsdale had to pursue on his way homeward, he was passing through the General Post-Office in the manner described, when an ejaculation of surprise uttered near him, caused him to turn quickly; and to his inexpressible horror and dismay he found himself confronted by the very man whom last of all on the face of the earth he would have chosen to encounter. This was Bates. If a hideous reptile had abruptly sprung up before him—if all in a moment he had beheld a tiger preparing to spring at him—or if a yawning gulf had suddenly opened beneath his feet, and he had felt the ground upon the brink giving way under him—the unhappy man could not have fallen back with a more dread recoil. Ruin appeared to look him in the face at that instant: frightful visions of imminent evil swept like a hurricane through his mind; the aspect of the world changed to his view more suddenly than the shifting scene of a theatre. All in an instant had he stepped from the confidence of security to the edge of an abyss, into which he felt a remorseless hand was dragging him down. The images of Lucy and his child rose up before him with despair pictured upon their countenances. In short, the rapid and varied agonies which he experienced at that moment, and all the intensities of which were concentrated into the space of that moment, were as frightful and as appalling as the thoughts which sweep through the brain of the drowning man, when in the last agony of the mortal struggle his mental notions revert to that home which he shall never behold again!

Mr. Bates was but very little altered in any respect: he was the same thin, miserable-look-

ing, half-starved wretch, in thread-bare apparel, that he had always been in Lonsdale's recollection. He wore a seedy black coat, very short in the sleeves, and leaving an interval of wrist between the cuff and the old well-worn black kid gloves, at the tips of which the fingers peeped out. His hat, of a very rusty appearance, seemed as if it had been sat upon, and then squeezed out again into as shapely an appearance as it could be made to assume after the crushing process: his linen was very dirty—his black trousers, well worn at the knees and uncommonly dingy, were much too short for him, displaying dirty white stockings—and his shoes seemed perfectly innocent of blacking. Such was his aspect; and he stood gazing with a sort of half-familiar half-astonished leer upon the unfortunate man who already felt that he was again doomed to be the wretch's victim.

But upon this occasion Bates seemed to feel that he could not possibly address Lonsdale in those terms of assumed friendliness which he had adopted when they met at Carlisle. That Frederick was again well-to-do in the world, was sufficiently indicated by his personal appearance; and that the barber intended to turn this circumstance to his own advantage, the reader has already guessed. But the villain felt that this time the extortion must be accomplished with undisguised effrontery and open ruffianism, and not by means of the assumption of a friendly aspect.

"I know—I feel—that you desire to speak to me," said Lonsdale, breaking silence as soon as he had recovered something like presence of mind: "but we cannot speak here. Moreover, it may perhaps better suit your own purposes," he added bitterly, "if you do not mention my name in this place."

"Lead on, then," said Bates, half-flippantly, half-doggedly; "and I will follow."

They passed out of the Post Office, and Frederick stopped at the door of the nearest public-house.

"No—this won't do," said Bates. "I mean to go home with you. So lead the way wherever you live."

"No," replied Lonsdale firmly; "you shall not coerce me thus. Whatever may now pass between us, can as well take place here as elsewhere."

"But I say it shan't though," rejoined Bates, in a tone and manner expressive of implacable resolve. "How do I know in what circumstances you are? I mean to judge for myself, and shall then be able to decide what you can afford to make it worth my while to hold my tongue. So now lead on."

"But if I refuse?" asked Frederick: and then he bit his lip almost till the blood came, to keep down the fury of those feelings which were agitating within him.

"There goes a policeman," was Bates's prompt answer: "and I can give you into charge as—"

"You need not name it," interrupted Frederick bitterly. "But wherefore this terrible persecution on your part? What harm have I ever done to you? while, on the other hand, have you not worked me miseries enough?"



"Come, I don't want to stand bandying words here. It suits my purpose to go with you to your home, wherever it is; and therefore you are only wasting time and exciting yourself for nothing."

"Are you not aware—do you not feel, that there must be some one at my house who will shrink in horror from your presence?"—and Lonsdale spoke in a low deep voice, as he fixed his eyes earnestly upon the sinister countenance of the barber.

"Oh, I will risk all that!" he exclaimed.

"But wherefore plunge a dagger into the heart of an amiable and excellent woman who never injured you? Mr. Bates, I beseech—I implore—I conjure you to spare *her*, if you will not spare *me*."

"I tell you again it's all nonsense to go on like this. You humbugged me at Carlisle——"

"I gave you all my savings," ejaculated Frederick in mingled anguish and rage.

"Your savings indeed! Why, you was in a position to have given me double. Do you think I didn't learn that afterwards? The waiter at the public-house told me that Mr. Mortimer—for that's the name you went by—was very comfortably off; and so, as you only gave me the beggarly fifty pounds that I got into trouble about, and did not even offer me a guinea or two to pay my expenses home, I was resolved to punish your meanness."

"This is but a wretched excuse indeed for your treachery in betraying me for the reward offered at the time?"—and Frederick spoke with a bitterness that he could not control, and which indicated at the moment that his feelings rendered him reckless of consequences.

"Now, if we attract a crowd by standing here in altercation in the broad daylight," said Bates, "it will be entirely your fault. Once more I tell you to lead on—or else I will knock the thing on the head at once by giving you into charge."

"Charge—what about giving in charge?" demanded the gruff tones of a policeman, who at the instant issued from the public-house, near the door of which the colloquy was taking place.

"Come with me," said Lonsdale, in a voice trembling with excitement, as he threw a look of entreaty blended with despair, upon the barber.

"Oh!" exclaimed this individual, turning to the police constable, "it's only a matter of conversation between this gentleman and me. There's no giving in charge in the question."

"Beg pardon, sir," said the constable, touching his hat to Lonsdale, who had all the appearance of a gentleman; and the officer went on his way.

"Now, you won't run that risk again, I know," said the barber, with impudent effrontery. "So lead on without any more ado."

Frederick had indeed received a mortal fright: for it had appeared to him at one moment that the fangs of the law were about to clutch him in their grasp. Wretched and miserable—with frenzy in his brain and anguish in his heart,—almost wishing that the earth would open and swallow him up—he led the

way towards his home—that home which he had left invested with happiness an hour back, but into the bosom of which he was about to return accompanied by the remorseless source of sorrow and desolation!

"This meeting with you comes amazing handy," said Bates, as they proceeded along the street together; for the fellow never could help indulging in his garrulous propensity whenever he had the opportunity. "The fact is, I have got into some more trouble with that cursed post-office at Oakleigh, and have now been ordered up to London to see the Postmaster's Secretary and make it all right with him if I can. There's a regular lead set at Oakleigh to ruin me; but I'll be hanged if they will prevail though, as long as I've got such a friend in you!"—and the barber laughed in that subdued chuckling sardonic manner which sounds upon the ear like the mockery of fiends.

Lonsdale made no observation: his mind was tortured with the direst anguish at the idea of the horrible blow which in a few minutes would be given to his beloved wife's happiness.

"You needn't make yourself miserable," resumed Bates: "for if you come down handsome and don't show no meanness this time, I won't hurt you. I really was sorry to hear that you got such a precious flogging as you did——"

"By the living God!" ejaculated Lonsdale, suddenly stopping and turning short round upon the barber, who for the moment recoiled in affright; "if you remind me of *that*, I shall no longer be master of myself. Fiend! devil!—the scars cover my back—the scars of that punishment which was inflicted through *you*!"—and as Lonsdale thus spoke, his countenance was convulsed and his eyes flashed fire.

"Well, I won't say no more upon the subject," exclaimed the barber, recovering his presence of mind. "But lead on—the people are already staring at us as they pass."

Lonsdale saw that it was so; and composing his excited and irritated feelings as well as he was able, he continued his way homeward, followed by the villain whom he longed to clutch by the throat, hurl into the gutter, and trample under foot.

The two ground-floor apartments of Lonsdale's house had been thrown into one to form the school-room; and Lucy happened to be in there at the time when her husband passed the window followed by Bates. It was a half-holiday for the boys, and therefore no scholars were assembled on the occasion; but little Freddy was playing about in the school-room. The instant Lucy beheld that man, she felt as if struck with a sudden blow of a hammer; and she staggered back a pace or two ere she could recover herself. Not a sound, not a murmur escaped her lips: she was stricken with consternation: it seemed as if an ice-bolt had penetrated her heart; and all the color which health and happiness had brought back to her blooming cheeks, fled in a moment, leaving a dead inanimate pallor behind. Her husband's knock at the front door startled her as it were from this stupor: she felt the blood rushing back to her heart with a painful stinging sensation; and the thought instantaneously occurred to

ler that this was the crisis demanding the exercise of all her fortitude. The servant-girl whom she kept, opened the front door; and Lucy issuing out of the school-room, bade the maid take care of little Frederick, while she went upstairs with her husband and the visitor.

The glance which Frederick and his wife exchanged, was one expressive of ineffable feelings—feelings that would indeed have been indescribable in words even if they had spoken; but they said nothing. Lucy led the way up to the neatly furnished parlor; and Bates, as he followed next, could not help thinking to himself what a splendid creature Mrs. Lonsdale had become. Six years had elapsed since he last saw her; and then she was a handsome and finely formed damsel; now she was the superb woman.

When the three gained the parlor, Bates sat himself down; and putting his old battered hat upon the floor, he looked about him as if he were a broker taking stock of a place into which he had just put a seizure.

Frederick availed himself of the opportunity while the man was thus engaged, to take Lucy aside; and in a quick whispering voice, he said, "The fellow will carry his extortion to the utmost limit. But my mind is made up. What we have earned by our industry, we will not part with to this villain. I will not beggar myself to take away the bread from you and my child. No, Lucy: by heaven I would sooner return to my regiment! They can but give me again what I have had before!"—and these last words were uttered bitterly.

"Now then, no whispering!" exclaimed Bates: "it isn't polite, and it looks suspicious."

"Mr. Bates," said Lonsdale, turning sharply round towards him, with arms folded across his chest and with a resolute air, "I may be a deserter—I may be in your power—and in five minutes I may be dragged away hence by the police. But nevertheless, I am the master here for the present; and if you dare speak in that impertinent tone again, I will kick you out of the house, no matter what the consequences may be."

"Do not—do not irritate him, my dearest husband!" said Lucy, catching Frederick by the arm, and speaking in a rapid whisper over his shoulder. "It will do no good. It is for your sake I counsel you, my own dear, dear husband!"

Lonsdale threw upon his wife a look of gratitude and tenderness, and then placed a chair for her to sit down, at the same time taking one himself.

"You seem inclined to ride it with a high hand, Master Lonsdale," observed Bates, who for a moment had been staggered and confused by the manner in which he was addressed: "but it won't do."

"Now, what do you require of me?" interrupted Lonsdale curtly and resolutely. "Of course, it is money. Name your demand."

"Well, I am not exactly prepared to state a particular sum," said the barber. "This is a six-room house, besides kitchen and washings; and so I suppose about forty pound a-year rent, considering its situation. It's well furnished

too—quite as well as the doctor's at Oakleigh—almost as good as Mr. Arden's. Well, I suppose I must set you down as at least two hundred a-year folks; and then reckoning savings, you can't have less than a year's income put by. So hand us over two hundred pounds, and you may consider that you are as safe as if you had got your discharge from the regiment."

Now this sum was just double as much as what the Lonsdales had really saved up; for they had purchased their furniture and the lease of the house; and thus their resources had been much encroached upon. But even that amount of one hundred pounds Frederick was resolved not to part with.

"In the first place," he said, still cold, firm, and resolute, "I only possess one-half of what you demand: and in the second place I am resolved sooner to risk or encounter anything than plunder my wife and child to minister to your extortions."

"I won't bate one farthing of the two hundred pounds," said the barber: "but if you like to give me half now and half in a week, I don't mind waiting in London for it."

"I will do nothing of the sort," replied Lonsdale. "And now perform your worst."

"Then what will you do?" asked Bates, fearful that he had perhaps gone too far.

"You ask me what I will do," replied Frederick, "which means, to what extent I will suffer myself to be plundered by you? Well, I will do this—"

"Make it liberal, mind!" interjected Bates.

"If you delivered me up to the authorities," continued Frederick, waving his hand impatiently at the interruption, "you would obtain twenty pounds, which is the reward offered for my apprehension: but were I to give you two hundred, or two thousand pounds this moment, you would to-morrow betray me all the same for the sake of the twenty. The Judas Iscariot of private life will not scruple to clutch the silver pieces of blood-money. Now then, I tell you what I will do. I will give you at once the twenty pounds which you would get by betraying me; and every year so long as I remain undiscovered and unmolested, I will faithfully and punctually remit you twenty pounds, so that it will be your interest to guarantee my safety."

"It won't do, Master Lonsdale!" exclaimed the barber. "Long before the first year expired, you would be off somewhere else, and I might whistle for my second twenty pounds till accident threw me in your way again. No—I will have the hundred pounds you say you have got: and then you can send me the twenty pounds of hush-money every year if you like. Them's my terms."

"And I do not agree to them," replied Frederick resolutely: for he saw that the barber had become less arrogant and overbearing than he was when he first entered the house.

"Come, Mrs. Lonsdale, put in a word to prevent your husband from making a fool of himself—"

"Do not dare to address my wife, sir!" interrupted Frederick indignantly: "and take care of the words that you utter—for I can tell



you that I am in no mood to be trifled with. You think that I am a desperate man, and you are right: but I am desperate only in this—that if I go back to my regiment to be tortured, maltreated, and tyrannized over, I shall at least have the consolation of knowing that my wife and child are beyond the reach of want; and even if I should die under that self-same torture, they will not be left penniless in the world. Now do you understand that I am quite desperate to dare everything rather than impoverish them to satisfy your villanous rapacity?"

Lucy could not help gazing with admiration upon her husband as he thus spoke; and though she would willingly—Oh! so readily, have resigned every farthing they possessed, and even dismantled the house from top to bottom to ensure his safety by pacifying the barber—yet she could not utter a word deprecative of the noble resolution and lofty courage which Frederick now displayed.

"Well, if my terms ain't accepted," said Bates, resolved to see what effect a renewed menace would produce, "I shall know how to act;"—and rising from his seat, he approached the door.

"For heaven's sake suffer him not to depart!" whispered Lucy, with a look of agony at her husband.

"He will not go, dearest," replied Frederick, in the same low and hurried voice.

"One word more," said Bates. "It does seem rather hard, perhaps, to take all your savings away: and if you've only one hundred—why it's not much. Come, I'll be reasonable. Give me fifty and let the arrangement for twenty pounds a year stand good."

"You had better do it," whispered Lucy. "Let us be rid of the dreadful man at once."

"You wish it—and it shall be done," rejoined her husband; then turning his eyes towards the barber, he said, "Since I have succeeded in rendering you thus comparatively moderate in your terms I agree to them."

Thus speaking he made a sign for Lucy to go and fetch the money; and after she had left the room, Bates observed, "Don't you mean to ask me to take a little refreshment—a drop of wine, or spirits, or what not?"

"I have none in the house," replied Frederick, "You surely can regale yourself to your heart's content in a few minutes, when you take your departure with my money in your pocket."

"Oh, yes—I can wait. I suppose you haven't heard I from yonder lately?"—and he jerked his thumb over his shoulder.

"Do you allude to Oakleigh? You can very well imagine that we have no correspondence there. Is Mr. Davis still in his former situation?"

"What! haven't you heard, then?" ejaculated the barber. "Well, I have got a bit of news to tell you! Davis has married again. He has been married this eighteen months and more; and a very nice match too—one of Colycynth's daughters. Miss Kitty—you remember her—the sprightliest and larkingest of the whole lot. Not that I mean to say any harm of her; but I should think that she is

rather too gay, and certainly a good deal too young for old Peter Davis. And between you and me, I think he already repents it: for he looks uncommon glum. And she is so extravagant—dresses out finer than ever! There's scarce a day passes that the carrier doesn't bring parcels for Mrs. Davis; and I happen to know," added Bates, "that she doesn't pay her linen-drapery and millinery bills at Middleton very regular."

Mr. Bates had indeed peculiar facilities for obtaining this information, inasmuch as a large portion of the correspondence passing through his hands in his capacity of postmaster, was regularly and unscrupulously violated by him.

"And so Mr. Davis is married again?" said Lonsdale, in a musing manner and not for the purpose of encouraging anything like familiar conversation with the barber. "Hush! my wife is coming."

Lucy re-appeared, and presented to her husband the money which she had been to fetch. Lonsdale counted it down upon the table; and Bates, with an air of triumph and satisfaction, consigned it to his pocket.

"I do not ask you," said our hero, "to keep your word—because I am well aware that you will only do so if it suits your purpose. But I think that you will be sufficiently mindful of your own interest as to comprehend that a regularly paid pension of twenty pounds a-year, will be better than the same sum obtained once for all, and as a reward for betraying me."

"You keep your agreement, and I shall keep mine. And now good bye"—with which words Bates took his departure.

When he was gone the husband and wife experienced considerable relief; and Lucy, throwing her arms about Frederick's neck, said to him, "Now, my dear husband, what are we to do? Have you still a feeling of confidence in your security? will you trust yourself to this man?"

"No, dearest—ten thousand times no!" returned Lonsdale. "Throughout my negotiation with him I had a certain object in view."

"I was convinced of it, Frederick—I, who can read your thoughts so easily, felt certain that you were revolving some ulterior plan in your mind. Oh! hesitate not to explain it to me, whatever it may be. Our home must be broken up again—and we must go elsewhere. Is it not so? But for that I am prepared. Indeed, I wish it—I desire it."

"Yes, dearest Lucy—that is the course which we must adopt: and it was for this reason I was determined not to be plundered of all our resources. I know that man well: I can now follow all the tortuous ways and crooked channels of his thoughts. So long as the money of which he has just robbed us lasts, he will leave us unmolested; for he flatters himself that I was sincere in offering him the annual pension—Heaven pardon me the falsehood and duplicity that I practised!—but still such dissimulation and deceit were not crimes, when brought to bear in self-defence against such a villain!"

"No, Frederick—you cannot reproach yourself. I understand the object you had in view:

it was to gain time. Our persecutor will leave us unmolested, with the idea that as you offer him the pension you are certain to remain here in this neighborhood and in this house."

"And into that belief I have evidently lulled him, and he will leave us unmolested for the present, thinking that he has only got to write or come at any time in order to practise a fresh extortion. Now, Lucy, cheer up your spirits and gather up your courage: for we will take a step that shall baffle him and set at defiance all our other enemies."

"Oh, your words fill my heart with joy!" exclaimed Lucy, the color returning to her cheeks. "What do you propose, Frederick?"

"We will repair to France," responded our hero. "I understand that there are numbers of English resident in Calais, Boulogne, and particularly in Paris: and in one of those places will we settle. You see, dearest, that whenever we are left to the exertions of our own honest industry, we invariably thrive: we are not even compelled to surmount difficulties in establishing ourselves: heaven prospers us, if vile man would leave us unmolested. In France we shall be safe."

"Oh! this resolve which you have taken, fills my heart with the brightest hopes," cried Lucy, joy dancing in her eyes. "Perhaps, dear Frederick, it was all for the best that this man should have come to us to-day! Otherwise, we might have lingered on here, lulled into a false security, until accident might sooner or later have thrown you in the way of some one who, recognising you, would not have been purchaseable with money, but would have surrendered you up to your enemies."

"Yes, dearest Lucy—all things considered the money from which we have just parted, will perhaps prove to have been expended for a good purpose."

Lonsdale now proceeded to inform his wife that her father had married again; but he did not choose to pain her by the intelligence which Mr. Bates had given him respecting the new Mrs. Davis's extravagant habits, and the hint he had thrown out at the bailiff's mournful looks.

"If this step will conduce to my father's happiness," said Lucy, "I am rejoiced that he has taken it. When once we are in France, dear Frederick, and beyond the reach of danger, you will permit me to write to him and beseech that he will withdraw those dreadful words he uttered against me more than three years ago at Portsmouth. For perhaps, now that he feels his home most lonely, and in the possession of a wife misses not his daughter, his heart will relent."

"Certainly, dear Lucy, you shall write to your father the moment we are settled in France. It would rejoice me unfeignedly that he should be touched by your filial conduct, and be moved to reply to you in a kind spirit."

The Lonsdales, having made up their minds to leave England, set about their preparations at once. They did not enter upon this task with very painful feelings; for there was hope in their hearts—and they were confident of earning a comfortable livelihood in the foreign

clime to which they were about to repair. It necessarily took several days to dispose of their furniture and give up the lease of their house; and as during this interval Frederick's safety remained unmolested, they had no doubt that their calculations were correct in respect to the course which Bates would pursue. As at Carlisle, Frederick took an affectionate leave of his scholars on breaking up his establishment; and his neighbors and friends were all sincerely grieved to part with him and his amiable wife.

When the hour of departure came, Frederick and Lucy could not help experiencing some little anxiety last the terrible scene at Carlisle should be enacted over again in London at the last moment: but when they entered the hackney-coach which had come to fetch them, and with all their boxes stowed upon the roof, and themselves with little Frederick safely ensconced, inside the vehicle drove away and no sinister countenance appeared to startle them, they felt that they were indeed safe. On arriving at Gracechurch Street, they took their places by a coach just starting for Dover, and were soon beyond the limits of the modern Babylon called London. They reached Dover without any adventure worth narrating; and when, on the following morning, they stood upon the deck of the steam-vessel bound for Calais, they exchanged look of unutterable joy—for they now experienced all the luxury of a consciousness of security beyond the possibility of accident or treachery.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE GOOD SAMARITANS.

FREDERICK LONSDALE had rightly said to his wife that when left to the exertions of their own honest industry, heaven prospered their efforts. They arrived in Calais with about one hundred and twenty pounds in their possession, and resolved to remain two or three days at an hotel to ascertain what the chances were of experiencing patronage for an English school. These they learnt to be far greater than Frederick's previous information and their own sanguine hopes had led them to expect. At that time Calais was thronged with English families; the lace-trade was flourishing, and there were many hundreds of English mechanics engaged in the French factories and earning high wages. There were numerous gentlemen's families settled in the town and its suburbs; and Lonsdale was informed that the great want experienced was for English schoolmasters. Moreover, on account of the rapidly increasing trade between Calais and England, many persons engaged in commercial pursuits in the former town, were anxious that their sons should learn English: and here was an additional chance of success for our hero, who, as already stated, had acquired by his own self-teaching a considerable proficiency in the French language. So far as his personal security was concerned, he was as safe on the frontier-town of Calais as he would have been at the other



extremity of France hundreds of miles away; and thus there was every reason to induce the Lonsdales to fix themselves where they had first set their feet on the French shore.

A neat, comfortable, and convenient house was taken at a very low rent, everything being excessively cheap in France at the time of which we are writing—namely, the close of the year 1834. Sixty or seventy pounds furnished the house comfortably; and they took possession of their new abode. It was a happy day for them when they just established themselves in the *homicile* they had fitted up in the town of Calais; for they had everything to cheer them, and nothing to throw a damp upon their spirits or make them dread to look into the future. There was not even now the *one* subject of apprehension to arise like a cloud in the midst of the otherwise clear heaven of their happiness; but that heaven was altogether cloudless now!

Lonsdale had some circulars printed and distributed; and these soon produced their effect. He retained the name of Robinson,—not because his sense of security was complete,—but because he naturally wished to destroy as much as he could, the possibility that his identification with the deserter Lonsdale should be even suspected, lest it might injure him in his professional avocations. Pupils crowded in upon him; and in the course of a few weeks he had as many as he could accommodate. The school was now larger than it had been in Finsbury; and although his terms were lower, yet considering the number of his scholars and the cheapness of the country in which he was living, his profits were not diminished.

So soon as they were thus comfortably settled, Lucy reminded Frederick of his promise that she should be allowed to write to her father; and he at once besought her to do so. She asked him whether any concealment need be practised in respect to their place of abode, and whether he would advise that the letters should be dispatched elsewhere to be posted? Her husband at once declared that he saw no reason for any such reserve, as the utmost injury which Mr. Davis could now do him, would be to take measures to spread a report in Calais who he really was: but he did not for a moment apprehend that Lucy's father would manifest any such petty spite towards him; or even if he still felt bitter, would incur the trouble and expense of such a vindictive proceeding. Lucy accordingly penned the following letter:—

“Calais, December 17th, 1834.

“My dear father,

“After so long an interval of silence, it may be that the sight of my handwriting will not prove altogether unwelcome to you. In this hope at least do I take up my pen. You will perceive that we are settled in Calais, where I am happy to inform you that through the noble industry of my excellent and well-beloved husband, our prospects are most flattering. The intelligence has reached me that you are married, my dear father; and in the sincere hope that this alliance is contributing to your happiness, do I offer you my congratulations. To my mother-in-law I hope that you will ren-

der my dutiful regards acceptable. And now, dear father, may I entreat that you will pen me a few lines in acknowledgment of this letter, and to convince me that with the lapse of time you have learned to think less harshly, less severely of your daughter? It would be an infinite source of joy to receive such an assurance from you. Do not therefore, I conjure you, treat this letter with silence: but pray let me hear from you, if it be only a single line at your earliest convenience. This, dear father, is close upon the Christmas season of the year—a period when animosities should be smoothed and conciliatory feelings should supersede them. Can you not—will you not, show that you appreciate the truth of this in respect to my husband?—for it is with pride and satisfaction that I can assure you, dear father, he has proved a most kind, a most loving, and a most affectionate husband to me, and also a fond parent towards our child.

“Trusting, therefore, that you will answer me in a strain which will fill my heart with rejoicing, I subscribe myself, dear father,

“Your very affectionate daughter,

“Lucy.

“P.S. Have the kindness to address me as Mrs. Robinson; for on account of reasons to which I need not more particularly allude, we are known in Calais by that name.”

Lucy showed this letter to her husband, who approved of the tone in which it was written: and a fond caress testified the gratitude he felt for the manner in which his beloved wife had alluded to himself. The letter was duly posted; and Lucy, calculating how many days must elapse ere she would receive a reply, buoyed herself up with the hope that at least by Christmas Day the wished-for response would arrive; and she could scarcely think so exceedingly ill of her father, notwithstanding his past conduct, as to suppose that he would refuse to address her in a strain of kindness.

A day or two after the letter had been despatched, a whispered rumour reached Frederick's ears that an English gentleman and his wife, who had recently arrived in Calais, and who passed by the name of Seagrave, were enduring the bitterest privations in the one room which served as their lodging; and that being unable to pay their rent, they even stood the chance of being expelled from that last refuge of their destitution. The generous hearts of Frederick and Lucy were immediately touched by this report; and they resolved to go together and visit the distressed couple. It was evening when the circumstances were mentioned to them; and they lost no time in setting out upon their expedition of charity. The weather was pretty cold: a strong north-westerly wind, blowing from the sea, swept through the streets of Calais like a hurricane; and the lamps suspended to the cords stretching across the thoroughfares, swayed to and fro like bells that are rung violently. As Frederick and Lucy drew their ample cloaks all the more closely around them, they experienced a still deeper interest in the couple whom they were about to visit; for the reflection was naturally

forced upon their minds that this was indeed a bitter bleakness but too well calculated to enhance the miseries and give a superadded keenness to the privations of the poor and destitute. At the same time they felt a glowing sense of gratitude in their hearts, that heaven had so well prospered their own industry and thrift as to place them beyond the reach of such ills as these which they were now bent upon relieving.

It was with some difficulty they discovered the house in which Mr. and Mrs. Seagrave dwelt—a house situated in one of the meanest and most secluded streets in the town of Calais. At length, however, they were successful; and an old crone, whose very countenance was sufficient corroboration of the tale they had heard to the effect that her lodgers were to be turned adrift, if they could not pay their rent, indicated a dark narrow staircase, but did not offer to escort them. Such brutal rudeness on the part of the woman was a singular exception to the general courtesy and civility which are to be found even amongst the lowest grades of the French people.

Frederick and his wife groped their way up the staircase; and on reaching the landing, knocked at the door of the chamber to which their attention had been particularly directed by the woman of the house. Their summons was answered by a young female holding a candle in her hand; and it seemed as if she immediately comprehended the object of this visit on the part of the two well-dressed persons—for she sank back in mingled shame and grief, and the tears started from her eyes. She was a young creature of not more than seventeen—exceedingly beautiful, notwithstanding her pale cheeks and her careworn looks. A perfect cloud of the darkest and glossiest raven hair fell in heavy masses upon her shoulders: her fine eyes matched those ebony tresses; and it was evident that their lustre, until dimmed by tears, must have been transcendent. She was not above the middle height—of slender figure—but of sylphid symmetry. She wore a silk dress, made in the first style of fashion, but soiled and stained in many places; and Lucy had no difficulty in perceiving at a glance that this was almost the only garment which the poor young creature had on.

"Mrs. Seagrave, I believe?" said our heroine, in her sweetest and softest tones.

"Who is that, Anna?" asked a voice from the interior of the chamber: and the tones were those of an invalid gentleman speaking faintly and with difficulty.

"Is Mr. Seagrave ill?" asked Lucy, taking the young creature's hand. "Pray forgive us for this intrusion: but we thought that perhaps we might be of some little service—Indeed, as your countrywoman, I am sure you will accept my sympathy and aid in the spirit in which both are offered. This is my husband; and with your permission he will introduce himself to Mr. Seagrave."

"Who the devil are they, Anna?" again spoke the invalid in sharp and petulant accents: for he had evidently failed to catch the words which Lucy had just uttered. "Why don't

you tell me what they are saying! what do they want? are they duns? If so, it's a pity that this cursed illness of mine prevents me from getting up and kicking them down stairs."

Mrs. Seagrave was so convulsed with grief, that she could not speak. On the one hand the kindness of Lucy's manner, at a moment when the appearance of friendly succor was evidently so little expected, had deeply touched the heart of the young creature; while, on the other hand, the sharp and almost cruel tones in which Mr. Seagrave spoke, cut that same gentle heart to the very core. Frederick and Lucy understood it all in a moment: it was a case of woman's illimitable and devoted love, patience, and resignation—tenderest ministrings and gentlest soothing—towards one who but little appreciated the extent of that affection. At the same time, too, it occurred to Frederick that the voice of the invalid was not altogether unknown to him: the accents indeed appeared familiar to his ear, although he spoke in too low and faint a tone to enable our hero to recognise them completely.

Mrs. Seagrave had pressed Lucy's hand with all the eloquence of silent gratitude between both her own—at the same time bending upon her a look which indicated all the gratitude that filled her heart, but to which she could not find words at the moment to give expression. Then, making a sign for Mr. and Mrs. Lonsdale to remain where they were for a few minutes, she approached the couch in which the invalid lay, and a portion of which was visible to the charitable visitors through the open door as they stood on the landing.

"Henry dear," said the young creature, in a voice of that soft and clouded harmony which showed that it was used to keep down tears and stifle sobs—but a voice full of the most touching pathos,—in its very accents bearing the burden of a devoted but ill requited love, "Henry dear," the murmuring tones repeated, "here are friends come to see us. Shall I ask them to enter? Do not, do not look at me so impatiently!" she added in an imploring manner, but in a whisper that was not intended to reach the ears of the visitors, although it did so.

"Friends do you say?" observed Seagrave bitterly, yet still in the faint and painful accents of the invalid speaking with difficulty: "I have been so long unaccustomed to see the things you call friends, that it would be rather novel to look at such curiosities. Yes, let them come in."

Anna tripped away from the couch, evidently rejoiced at the permission thus accorded, although given in such a strange, bitter, harsh, unfeeling, and cynical style: for the poor young creature had no doubt anticipated a stern refusal to suffer them to enter at all. She made a sign for Lonsdale and his wife to walk in; and crossing the threshold, they found themselves in a meanly furnished chamber, the chill of which was as great as that on the landing, and therefore too plainly indicated that the shut-up stove in the corner contained not a particle of fuel. The invalid had raised himself to a half-sitting posture in the bed: his



countenance was ghastly pale—the impress of death's hand was already upon it: but in the wreck and emaciation of the once haughtily handsome features, Frederick had no difficulty in recognising at the instant the dissipated and reckless spendthrift—Captain Courtenay!

He started back in mingled surprise and horror, and an ejaculation escaped his lips: but the horror he thus felt was through no apprehension on his own account, because he had nothing to fear: it was excited by the spectacle which met his eyes—the death-bed of the once gay, dashing, handsome, and proud Courtenay!

"Why does he cry out like that?" asked the invalid: and indeed both Lucy and Anna had turned their amazed and inquiring looks upon Frederick. "I think I ought to know that face," continued Courtenay, gazing intently with his dull glassy eyes upon our hero: then, as the truth flashed in upon his memory, he almost bounded in his bed, as he exclaimed in stronger accents, mingled with a haughty fierceness, "Why, it is that scoundrel, Lonsdale the deserter!"

Lucy was cruelly shocked; and staggering back, she clung for support to the arm of her husband, who stood petrified, not knowing what to say or do: for he also was cruelly shocked at this heartless conduct on the part of one whom he had come expressly to relieve. As for Anna, she hastened to throw her arms round Courtenay's neck, murmuring, "Do not excite yourself, dear Henry! No matter what Mr. Lonsdale has been, it was for the kindest and most generous purpose that he came hither now."

"Do get away, Anna—you half stifle me," said Courtenay, with unfeeling petulance. "There! what the devil's the use of whimpering like that? May I be hanged if you ain't always crying from morning till night. But why does that fellow remain here? I must get up to kick him down stairs: he has only come to mock me, just because I am under a cloud for the present!"—and Courtenay actually made an effort to get out of bed, repulsing poor Anna with the utmost brutality, and even hurling an imprecation at her. But the effort was too great for him: disease held him by strong chains to that bed, which it was too evident he could never leave alive; and sinking back upon the bolster in exhaustion, he muttered with shocking bitterness, "It's all through you, Anna, throwing your arms round my neck and pawing me about: you have shaken all the breath out of my body."

"Captain Courtenay," said Lonsdale, who had by this time recovered his presence of mind, "I do beseech you to understand that it is entirely with a Christian intent that I and my wife have come hither now. We knew not whom we should see. Little indeed did I expect to recognise in Mr. Seagrave any one who was known to me."

"I will be hanged if the fellow isn't talking just as if we had been intimate acquaintances," muttered Courtenay, speaking with difficulty. "Get out, I say—be off with you! If we were in England, I should send for the police."

"O Henry!" exclaimed Anna, weeping bitterly, and clasping her hands in an agony of despair: "this is indeed too much. For God's sake, Mr. Lonsdale, do not heed him! And you, my dear madam," she continued, turning to Lucy, whose hands she took and pressed with grateful fervor, "do not, do not be angry or account of this! Alas," added the poor creature, in a voice almost suffocated with sobs, "we have suffered so much that I fear his reason is impaired."

"Captain Courtenay," said Lonsdale, advancing towards the bed, "believe me when I assure you that to the utmost of my endeavors will I contribute to your comfort. I do not for a moment forget the difference of our social positions——"

"Then why the deuce do you stay here any longer?" interrupted the dying man, with still unrelenting bitterness. "I don't want your help: it suits us to live like this—doesn't it, Anna? Say yes. We don't want for anything; and if we did, I would sooner starve—yes, by God, starve—than accept anything from such hands as yours! And now be off. Why the deuce don't you go? Anna, turn them both out directly! Do you hear me? I command you to turn them out!"—and now, completely exhausted by the efforts which it cost him thus to speak, Captain Courtenay sank into a state of insensibility.

"He is dead! heavens, he is dead!" exclaimed Anna wildly; and falling upon her knees by the side of the bed, she buried her face in her hands, giving vent to the most passionate outpouring of grief.

"No—he is not dead: do not excite yourself thus," hastily whispered Lucy: then she lost no time in applying restoratives—and from a basket which she had brought under her cloak, and which was filled with provisions of every kind, she drew forth a bottle of brandy, and pouring some into a glass, bathed the invalid's temples with it.

For some minutes poor Anna was so overpowered by her feelings that she could not lend her any assistance: the thought that he whom she loved so devotedly was no more, had stricken her with a convulsing agony, almost driving her distracted, and from which paroxysm of anguish she could not speedily recover. But when, thanks to the kind ministrations of Mrs. Lonsdale, Captain Courtenay began to show signs of returning animation, the young creature's grief changed into the wildest joy; and throwing her arms round Lucy's neck, she embraced her fervently. It was at least twenty minutes before the Captain returned to a complete state of consciousness; and in the meantime Frederick had withdrawn from the room, in order that his presence might not disturb the unfortunate gentleman again on coming back to himself.

"Where am I?" murmured Courtenay, in a faint voice, as he opened his eyes and gazed vacantly around: but his intellect was still too clouded, his thoughts too confused, to enable him to understand the circumstances of his position—so that his ideas wandered into other channels, and the reminiscences of past times

came back, but in jumbled bewilderment, to his brain, "Come, Fitzmorris, pass the bottle: why the deuce do you let it stand before that silly puling boy, Paget? He thinks himself a man—he is but a child—a glass makes him drunk. Now, Scott, come up to my room, and we'll crack a bottle between us. Don't bring old Heathcote with you: he is such an awful bore. Now, Wyndham, are you going to ride out to-day? or let us sit down and play piquet—five guinea stakes. Oh, you prefer ecarté? Well, so be it. I'll bet you twenty guineas to five that I vole you. Done! Voled by God! Have at it again! Oh, Anna, so I have got you after all! Well, you played the prude a precious long time: but now you are mine. Eh—what? you talk of marriage? Absurd! Captain Courtenay never marries: he loves and he seduces—but marriage be hanged! What is that you say? It will break your mother's heart! Stuff and nonsense!—women's hearts don't break. Tie him up there! I like to see the triangle. Now then, Sergeant-Major Langley—tell those drummer boys to do their duty. The rascals! make them hit harder! Take up another cat; you vagabond; and now lay it on in good style. It does one's heart good to see that!"

In this manner did Captain Courtenay continue to talk, murmuringly and wanderingly, in broken sentences—flying from one subject to another—sometimes in low accents, sometimes with feverish excitement—while his looks modelled themselves to the nature of the ejaculations he thus sent forth. To Mrs. Lonsdale, who was standing near, a revelation was thereby made concerning the precise nature of the connexion between the Captain and the unfortunate young creature who loved him so devotedly, and who having first been made the dupe of his treachery, had since become the victim of his tyranny. As those portions of his subdued ravings, or rather wanderings, came from his lips, the wretched Anna again sank down upon her knees—again buried her face in the bedding—again gave vent to convulsive sobs. Painfully, most painfully did Lucy feel for that interesting and beautiful creature: yes—interesting, we repeat, because of her faithful love and devoted constancy towards the man who had ruined her. Bending down towards the kneeling, weeping, sobbing girl, Lucy whispered in soft and soothing tones, "Poor creature! you are to be pitied rather than be blamed: and whatever happens here, I will be a friend to you."

Anna started up, and throwing herself upon Mrs. Lonsdale's bosom, wept long and passionately.

"Now, is that fellow gone?" said Courtenay, after a pause in his wanderings, during which his intellect had recovered from its confusion.

Mrs. Lonsdale stood back, behind the head of the common japanned bedstead, so that she was now screened from the invalid's view: for she was fearful that even her presence, as Lonsdale's wife, might tend to provoke fresh excitement on the part of the invalid.

"Henry—dear Henry," said Anna, hastily wiping away her tears, and bending over the

Captain, "you are very ill—and you excite yourself greatly."

"Then why do you let such people as those come near me?" demanded the invalid sharply.

"They came, Henry, with the best and purest motives," was Anna's gentle response. "Do not, I beseech you—Oh, do not think ill of those kind and benevolent persons!"

"What the deuce would you have me do?" interrupted Courtenay. "Hav'n't I told you about that fellow Lonsdale's case—what a scamp the rascal was—"

"Hush, hush, for God's sake!" ejaculated Anna, cruelly tortured on Lucy's account.

"Why should I hush if they are gone? That fellow was a private soldier; and do you suppose, Anna, for a single moment, that I who was his officer, will accept succour from him! I would sooner perish—I would sooner die outright of starvation. Give me some water: my throat's as parched as perdition itself. I wish to God I had some nice cooling wine: but as I haven't, give me water. Come, look sharp about it."

Anna turned away from the couch to fill a glass with water: but Mrs. Lonsdale, stooping down to the basket which stood at her feet, drew forth a bottle of wine, which she quickly handed to the young lady; and Anna, flinging a glance of gratitude upon her, hastened to mix some wine and water in the glass. She then approached the bed, and tendering it to the invalid, said in a soft endearing tone "Drink this, dear Henry—it will do you good."

"Why, what the deuce is it? It's dark—it's not water. There is wine in it," ejaculated Courtenay.

"No—there is something in it—just to color it—it will do you good:"—and Anna spoke hesitatingly, with evident apprehension lest he should discover the source from whence the wine came, and in his stern unbending pride refuse it.

"Well, but what the devil is it? Do you want to knock me off at once? are you giving me poison?" he exclaimed brutally.

"O God!" muttered the unhappy girl; and she would have fallen, had she not clung to the head of the bedstead for support. "Henry, Henry, is this the reward for all my love! Have I not clung to you devotedly? have I not suffered with you? Yes—and heaven is my witness that I have refused food, pleading illness, that you might have more for yourself! Oh, it is too cruel—it is too cruel!"

"Don't stand whimpering there, and going on like this!" ejaculated the Captain, savagely. "I suppose it is wine, then?" he continued, still holding the glass in his hand. "But, ah! I can guess where it comes from:"—and in a moment he dashed the contents of the tumbler upon the floor: then in a stern voice he said, "Now fill it with water."

The tears rained down poor Anna's cheeks, as she received the glass from his hand and obeyed his mandate. She threw a deprecating imploring look upon Lucy, as much as to beseech her not to feel wounded or offended at this fresh manifestation of the intense pride which the fallen man still clung to, even when at the



point of death; and the kind-hearted Mrs. Lonsdale made Anna aware with a significant glance that she was grieved, but not indignant.

"There! that's more welcome than all the wine in the world if sent by charity!" It was thus that Courtenay spoke, when, having emptied the glass, he gave it back to Anna; then after a silence of upwards of a minute, he said, "Have you got anything to eat? I feel faint and hungry. A crust will do: for I suppose there is nothing more."

Mrs. Lonsdale took a loaf from the basket, and handed it to Anna, who approached the bed with it.

"Where did you get all that from?" demanded Courtenay, with brutal abruptness.

"I sent out something to be pledged just now—"

"It's false! there was nothing left to pledge. You hadn't even an under-garment left. Now, tell me what have you pledged?"

"Some linen—some trifles—no matter what: but pray eat!" and poor Anna, again convulsed with grief, proffered him a piece of the bread: then as she saw that he did eat it, for he believed what she had just told him, her anguish abated, and something like an expression of joy gathered upon her countenance.

"There, dear Henry," she said: "you feel better now? Let me put away the hair from over your forehead—"

"No—let me alone: I shall be better presently. What a smell of brandy there is!"

"It was a little drop I borrowed from the woman of the house to recover you just now when you fainted."

"That's as false as perdition, Anna!" exclaimed Courtenay, with fierce brutality: "for the hag wouldn't give you a drop. Ah, I suppose she will come up again to-morrow with her threats and her impudence: but I hope to be better then—and I will pitch her neck and crop down stairs. Deuce take these mean and pitiful relations of mine, to leave me here in such a state! I will write to Wyndham to-morrow, to lend me fifty pounds: he is sure to send it—and I don't mind borrowing of a gentleman. By the bye, I shan't forget to mention that I fell in with that scoundrel Lonsdale—"

"O Henry, it is really too bad," cried Anna, "to speak thus of one who came—"

"Hold your tongue, you minx—and don't dare dictate to me! I never have beat you yet: but I will soon. And now be quiet: don't talk any more, for I feel inclined to sleep."

Anna bent over the sick man's couch, and imprinted a kiss upon his wan emaciated cheek: but he muttered something to the effect that "he wished she wouldn't bother him;" and she drew back, with difficulty suppressing a sob. In a few minutes Captain Courtenay slumbered; and Lucy then asked Anna in what way she could best assist her. She intimated that the basket contained a variety of necessaries and comforts; and still more delicately hinted that amongst the things would be found a hundred francs—a sum equivalent to four pounds of English money. Anna expressed her fervid gratitude to her benefactress—and then ex-

claimed, "Oh, that he would permit a physician to be sent for!"

"I will speed for one this moment," cried Lucy, hastening the chamber door.

"No—it is useless," responded Anna, shaking her head mournfully. "He will not have a doctor: he persists in believing that he will soon get well, if left to himself. He pretends that I annoy and vex him: though heaven knows what he would have done for weeks and weeks past without me! If I entreat him to have medical advice, he bids me hold my tongue. If I caress and endeavor to soothe him—But, ah, Mrs. Lonsdale you have seen enough to imagine all I suffer!" and the poor young creature burst into tears.

"But he *must* have advice!" said Lucy, firmly, when this new paroxysm of grief on the part of Anna had subsided. "He cannot be left thus!"

"Do you—do you think he is very—very ill?" asked the affectionate girl, in the hesitating voice of one who feared to put the question, because she but too plainly foresaw what the response would be. "No—he is not so very ill—is he? Tell me that he is not."

"My dear young lady," replied Lucy, fixing upon the hapless creature a look of boundless compassion, "you must not buoy yourself up with the hope that he will speedily get well: for I am afraid that—"

"That he is indeed very ill!"—and Anna gazed upon our heroine with painful anxiety, while she spoke in the hushed voice of profoundest terror.

"Yes—I am afraid that he is very ill. He must have advice. I will send a physician to him on leaving this house. The doctor will, if needful, force his attentions upon Captain Courtenay."

"Use the name of Seagrave," said Anna imploringly: "for his pride is such, that so long as he remains in poverty he will not suffer himself to be known."

Lucy pressed the poor girl's hand with a sad tightening at her own heart; she felt convinced that within a very few days, if not within a few hours, the object of the young lady's devoted love would cease to exist.

Mrs. Lonsdale descended the stairs, and found her husband in conversation with the woman of the house in a room on the ground-floor. A pile of money, amounting at least to two hundred francs—or eight pounds—lay upon the table; and in his hand Frederick held a receipt which the woman had just written. He had paid the entire arrears of rent due by Captain Courtenay; and this was perhaps one of the noblest chapters in Lonsdale's life—that notwithstanding all the goading insults he had within the last hour endured from that proud remorseless man, he had thus parted with the earnings of his own industry to alleviate the sorrows of his illness and smoothe down his dying pillow!

"Frederick," murmured Lucy, as they issued forth from the house together—and she pressed his arm fervidly to her bosom as she spoke,—"I always knew you were the most generous-hearted of men; but this last incident has just

displayed your character to me in all its most glorious colors. God bless you, my beloved Frederick! Oh, that such a one as you should ever have gone through so much!"

"And you, my sweet Lucy," replied our hero,—"have you not also shown the kindest of sympathies for the affliction of others? After all, we have but done our duty; and in our hearts' satisfaction is there an adequate reward?"

They proceeded to the nearest physician's house, and at once despatched him to the invalid,—Lonsdale guaranteeing the payment of his fees. The benevolent couple then returned to their own house: but for all the rest of that evening they could talk and think of nothing except the sad scene of which they had been spectators.

As soon as Frederick was dressed on the following morning, he called upon the physician to inquire concerning his patient. The medical gentleman told him precisely what he already expected to hear; namely, that Mr. Seagrave was beyond the possibility of hope—that it was evident a naturally vigorous constitution had been broken down by a career of inveterate dissipation and reckless debauchery—and that recent sufferings, privations, and miseries had hurried the unfortunate man on towards the crowning catastrophe. The physician added that it was scarcely possible Mr. Seagrave could exist throughout the day—that a great change for the worse had taken place in him during the night—and that he (the medical man) was immediately about to return to the couch of his dying patient. Frederick, much shocked to learn that the issue was so near at hand, inquired if the doctor had in any way prepared Mrs. Seagrave for it?—to which the medical gentleman replied that he had felt it his duty to do so, and that the poor young creature was in a state bordering on distraction. Frederick besought him to lose not a minute in returning to Mr. Seagrave's lodgings, while he hurried home to tell Lucy all he had just heard.

"I will go and do my best to soothe poor Anna," said Mrs. Lonsdale: then taking her husband's hand, and looking up earnestly in his face, she added, "Frederick, that unfortunate girl, who is doubtless far more to be pitied than blamed, will soon be without a home."

"No, my dear wife," answered Lonsdale, at once anticipating Lucy's meaning: "henceforth she must have a home with us."

Our heroine embraced her noble-hearted husband, and then lost no time in speeding away on her mission of benevolence and Christian charity. When she reached the house in which Courtenay and Anna dwelt, the old woman, who opened the door, shook her head as much as to imply that there was no hope; for now that she saw her lodgers had friends, she could afford to manifest a little sympathy on their behalf—chiefly, no doubt, because she was afraid of losing them both through the death of one. Lucy ascended the stairs, and gently passed into the chamber of the dying man. The physician was seated by the side of the bed—while Anna was bending over the patient,

her tears dropping on his cheeks, and her bosom convulsed with the sobs which she vainly endeavoured to stifle. She had evidently been up all night: the cloud of her raven black hair was pushed back in dishevelled masses from her throbbing temples, upon which the luxuriant tresses kept obtruding as she bent over the dying man: her cheeks were ashy pale—and when she turned to press Lucy's hand, there was a wild despair in her large black eyes that actually terrified the kind mistress who came to console her. As for the patient himself, he was lying motionless, but with his eyes wide open, gazing up as if they were fixed on the pole supporting the curtains, or else upon some object created by a morbid fancy. If the hand of death had visibly begun to touch his cheeks on the previous evening, its mark was now still more unmistakably discernible upon every lineament; and as Lucy glanced towards the physician, he made her a rapid sign that the crisis was near at hand.

"Will you not come away, for a few minutes into some other room?" whispered Lucy to Anna, thinking it better, if possible, to withdraw her from the sight of the death-struggle which was evidently approaching.

"Oh, not for worlds!" murmured the unhappy girl, clasping her hands in the anguish of her despair. "But tell me, dearest Mrs. Lonsdale—tell me what you think: is there no hope? I dare not admit to myself that I understand what this kind gentleman"—alluding to the doctor—"has been saying to me. Tell me, tell me, is there indeed no hope?"—and the poor creature shuddered all over, as if with an ice-chill, while the chattering of her teeth was plainly audible.

"You must, my dear Anna—you must indeed," said Lucy, the tears streaming down her cheeks,—"prepare yourself—for the worst!"

"Oh! but not yet—not yet!" murmured the unhappy girl, in low but hysterical accents, while she still continued to shiver from head to foot. "It cannot be so near! Tell me—do you not think that he will live a week—just one short week—so that I may get accustomed to the thought that he must die?"

"My dear young friend," answered Lucy "do not, I beseech you, buoy yourself up with any hope. Indeed, suffering as he now is—reduced to extremities as you behold him—you cannot in mercy wish him to linger on!"

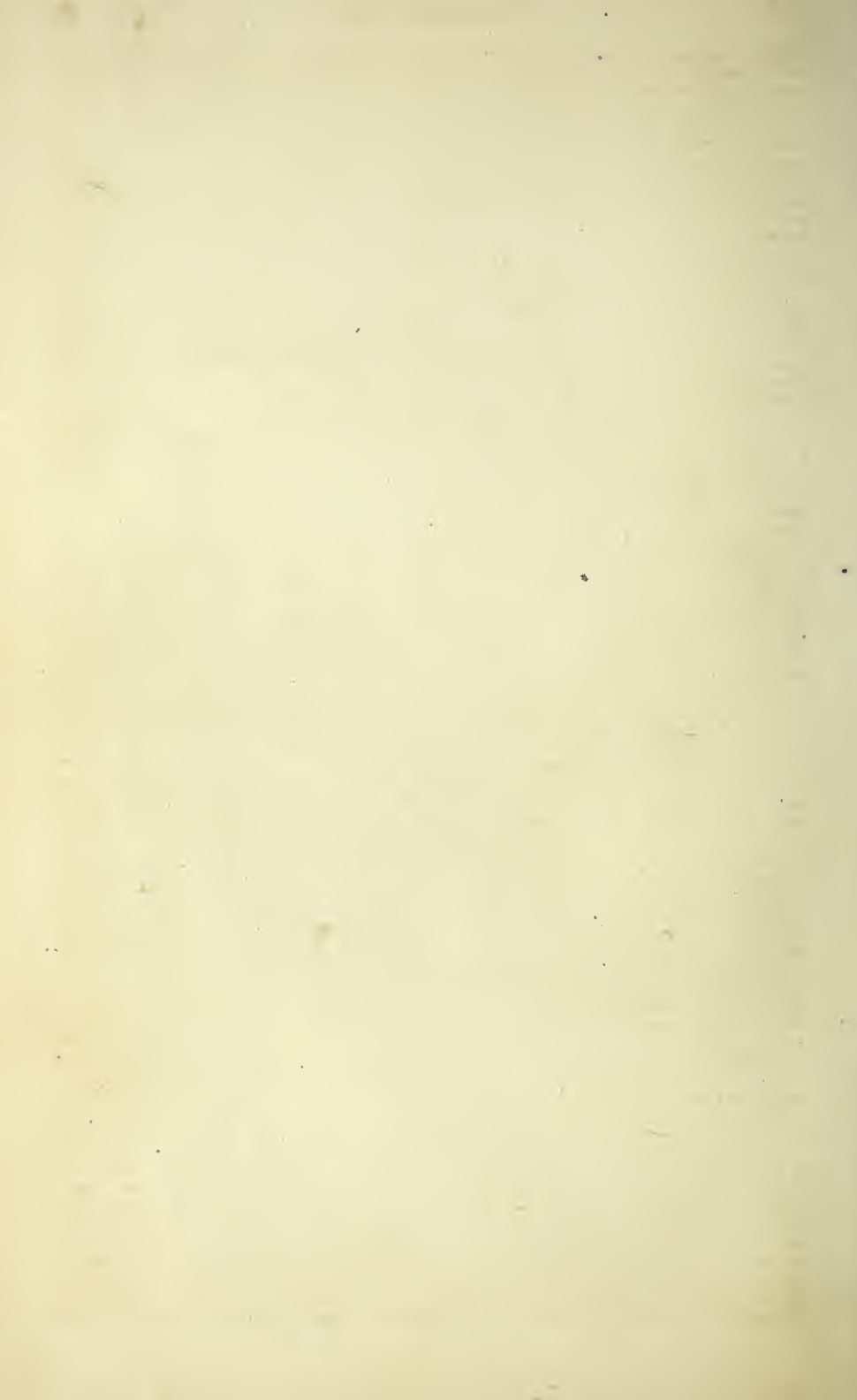
"No, no—I have no hope—it has been gone for hours past? But at the same time, one does cling to hope, even as it is vanishing away? My God, to think that he is going—that I shall lose him soon—all I have dear upon earth—And I—what will become of me?"

"You will find a home with me, dear Anna," was Lucy's gentle and affectionate reply.

"Ah, excellent friend that you are—best and kindest of women!" exclaimed Anna, pressing Lucy's hand to her lips: "ten thousand thanks. But it was not of *that* I was thinking. Even if from this chamber I were conveyed to a palace when he is gone, yet still should I ask what is to become of *me*? I cannot live without him;" and sinking upon a chair, she again abandoned herself to all the wild bitterness of her grief.









In a few moments the patient moved in his couch, and gave a prolonged gasp. Anna started from her seat, and hastened to bend over him, in an agony of terror lest he should be no more, and that this was his last sigh which she had heard. But it was not so. Courtenay was yet alive: and the physician, pouring a few drops of some colorless liquid from a little phial into a wine-glass half-filled with water, forced the contents down his throat.

"Will that revive him?" was Anna's eager but whispered question.

"I fear, Mrs. Seagrave," responded the physician, "that its effect will be slight—I dare not tell you otherwise."

"Oh! if he could only recognise me," murmured Anna: and now she covered his ghastly cheeks with the most passionate kisses,—kisses in which all the immensity of her love and the wildness of her affliction appeared to be blent,—kisses, which, if the tenderest demonstrations of woman's holy affection could infuse life into the dying, would have proved ten thousand times more effective than the subtle essence which the medical man had just administered in the wine-glass.

For the next half-hour Courtenay continued to lie motionless, his eyes wandering slightly, and his lips every now and then opening to give forth a prolonged and painful gasp. All this while Anna continued to bend over him, lavishing her caresses upon that countenance where the clammy chill of death was already fast gathering. Presently his lips, gradually unfolding, remained apart altogether—and then there came up from his throat a low half-whistling, half-gurgling sound which did not subside. For two or three minutes Anna listened in dumb and statue-like suspense. It was a sound that evidently came ominously upon her ears; and when she perceived that it did not leave off, but that it increased into a kind of rattle, as of water and of wind meeting and agitating together in the throat,—she threw a wild glance of terror upon the physician, demanding quickly, "What is that?"

"My dear young lady," was the medical man's solemn response, "you would do well to leave the room with your friend."

"No, no," murmured the wretched being; "I understand it now! I will remain until the last!"—and her teeth again chattered with the intensity of her agony.

Yes—it was indeed the death-rattle now in the throat of the dying man: and Lucy, feeling more than ever at that instant a boundless compassion for the young lady, could not restrain her tears and her sobs. For two or three minutes, that ominous, awful sound continued,—while Anna's moans mingled with the caresses as she bent over the departing one. At length the rattling appeared to subside—it ceased—and a wild piercing shriek, thrilling forth from Anna's lips, indicated that all was over. She started up as if suddenly galvanized as she gave vent to that scream: then she appeared to stagger back a pace or two: Lucy sprang forward to save her from falling—but at the self-same moment the unfortunate young

creature fell forward upon the couch—and with a low moan remained motionless, with her face on the breast of the corpse. Lucy and the physician hastened to raise her: but to their unspeakable horror they beheld a little pool of blood upon the shirt of Captain Courtenay; and the glance which they threw at Anna's countenance, revealed to them the sad truth in a moment. The poor girl was dead! She had burst a blood-vessel: the tide of life had poured forth from between her lips: it might literally be said that her heart had suddenly broken.

Thanks to the generosity of the Lonsdales, Courtenay and the unfortunate Anna were laid side by side in the cemetery without the walls of Calais; and the English Protestant minister who was established in the town, performed the funeral rites. Lonsdale then communicated to the British Consul the secret of the deceased gentleman's real name, in order that his friends might be written to and apprised of his death.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE LETTER.

THIS tragical circumstance produced a very painful effect upon the minds of both Frederick and Lucy—more especially upon that of the latter, who had been an eye-witness of the closing scene. They however had the satisfaction of knowing that they had done all they could for the departed—and far more than most other persons in the world would have performed, especially under the circumstances, which tended to throw out our hero's character in such noble colors.

Christmas Day passed: the month of December was drawing to a close, conducting with it the year to which it belonged into the grave of Time;—and Lucy began to fear that her father would not answer her letter. But one morning the postman called at the Lonsdales' house; and an epistle, bearing the English postmark, but the address of which was written in a female hand, was delivered to our heroine, being directed to *Mrs. Robinson*. She hastened to tear it open, and found its contents to be as follows:—

"Paris Hotel, Dover.

"December 29th, 1834.

"My dear Lucy,

"For in this style will you permit me to address you, considering the position in which we stand relative to each other. Your father received your letter, which was indeed most welcome to him. For some time past he had been led to the reflection that his conduct might possibly have been too harsh and too severe towards you. I will not altogether take credit to myself for having induced these feelings in your father's breast; but you will at least give me credit for having fostered them; for I assure you that from the very day on which I became your mother-in-law, I have exerted myself to promote a reconciliation between my husband and his daughter. Therefore, months and months ago, had he known where to find you,

he would have certainly taken up his pen to write you a few lines and assure you of his desire to bury all the past in oblivion. Thus was it that your letter proved truly welcome both to him and to myself. And perhaps, dear Lucy, you will be still more rejoiced to learn that this forgiveness on your father's part is intended not to be confined to yourself alone, but to include your husband. The manner in which you write of Mr. Lonsdale's invariably kind and affectionate conduct towards you could not fail to touch the heart of a father already disposed to receive his daughter to his arms. You will therefore have the pleasure of conveying to Mr. Lonsdale the assurance of Mr. Davis, that when next they meet, it will be to exchange the warmest and the most cordial pressure of the hand.

"You will doubtless be astonished to see that I date this letter from Dover: but when I explain the reason, you will accept it as an additional proof of Mr. Davis's anxiety to effect a speedy reconciliation with yourself and your husband. Here, however, by what I am about to state, I find myself compelled to throw a damp upon the joy which a former part of my letter will doubtless occasion you. For some time past your father's health has caused great alarm to myself and his friends. He is not unaware that his health is impaired, and very materially so—amongst the evidences of which is a certain morbid state of feeling which causes the idea of a speedily approaching death to haunt him constantly. I do not however think that there is any very serious apprehension.

"Under that impression, notwithstanding, your father was determined to undertake a journey to Calais that he might embrace you ere he dies. He was well aware that certain reasons would lead you and Mr. Lonsdale to prefer that this visit should be paid to you both in Calais, than that you should be requested to undertake a journey to England for the purpose of a meeting. I need scarcely say, Lucy, that I attempted not to dissuade my husband from a plan so entirely in accordance with my own good feeling towards you. I moreover fancied that change of air and scene, even at this cold winter-season, would benefit your father. We accordingly set out three days ago, and arrived at Dover last night. But the fatigues of travelling—combined perhaps with some little degree of excitement at the thought of meeting you and your husband again, and on such different terms as heretofore,—operated prejudicially to your father's health; and he was during the night taken very ill. Again I assure you that there is no cause for serious apprehension; and the medical gentleman who is in attendance upon him, is of the same opinion. But it is considered most inexpedient for your father to cross the channel at this season of the year; and the medical attendant strongly sets his face against it. Mr. Davis, however, is now more than ever anxious to embrace you, dear Lucy, and shake Mr. Lonsdale by the hand: more than ever is he imbued with the morbid presentiment that he has but a short time to live. Under these circumstances, I earnestly conjure both you and your husband

to come across, if it be only for a single day, and see Mr. Davis.

"I have put off writing until close upon the post-hour, that I might see how he progresses. He has just told me that he feels convinced his end is approaching; and I certainly fear that he will fret and grieve himself into a very serious illness, which may prove really fatal, unless you come, both of you, and appease him. I say *both of you*, because my husband declares that he could not die happily unless he grasped Mr. Lonsdale's hand, as well as embraced you, dear Lucy, in his arms. He feels that he has wrongs to atone for towards your husband; and he would not even be satisfied with a mere verbal assurance, conveyed by the lips of another, of Mr. Lonsdale's complete forgiveness. Therefore, under all these circumstances, I have no doubt that you will both accede to the urgent request which I thus proffer on behalf of myself and my husband.

"Believe me to remain, dearest Lucy,

"Your affectionate mother-in-law,

"CATHERINE DAVIS."

As the reader may suppose, Lucy was in one sense overjoyed by this letter. It assured her of a complete reconciliation with her father—and what was equally delightful, it proffered the same towards her husband. She, however, could not help fearing, on the other hand, that her father's illness was more severe than her mother-in-law either chose to believe or admit. Having read the letter, she placed it in Frederick's hands, and watched his countenance as he read it. His features showed by their expression that he fully shared in his beloved Lucy's joy and delight in respect to the proffered reconciliation; and when he had finished the perusal, he at once said to her, "We must go."

"You do not apprehend that you are incurring any risk?" asked Lucy, clinging affectionately to his arm.

"So little, I conceive," was her husband's reply, "that it will cause me no uneasiness: but even if I thought it great, I should not shrink from chancing it under such circumstances. No, dear Lucy—I am not apprehensive on that score. The regiment to which I belonged, is still stationed at Manchester, many long miles away from Dover. Yes, we will go! Fortunately it is the Christmas holidays, and therefore we can spare a few days without detriment to the school."

"And Freddy will go with us?" said Lucy.

"As a matter of course. The dear child will enjoy the little trip: and moreover, under present circumstances, your father will be delighted to acknowledge and welcome his grandson."

The preparations they had to make for so short an expedition, were necessarily few and limited; and they accordingly resolved to answer the letter in person by proceeding to Dover on the following day. It was a source of satisfaction that the weather was now very beautiful, considering the season of the year—healthy and bracing, without being bleakly cold: and the sea was perfectly calm. *Fred-*



rick and Lucy, with their beloved little boy, stepped accordingly on the deck of the French steam-packet at about ten in the morning; and in about two hours and a half they entered Dover harbor. It was perhaps with a momentary sense of insecurity—or rather, we should say, with something like a regret at having been compelled to quit a state of completest security—that Frederick stepped forth from the steam-packet on the stairs leading to the quay; but this feeling almost immediately vanished, as he thought to himself of the million chances to one that there were against his being recognised and taken. Lucy experienced a transitory fluttering at the heart—but nothing that might be called serious apprehension: for she saw likewise the incalculable chances in favor of her husband, and the few that existed against him. To little Frederick, the whole scene was full of the novelty and excitement of change; and he skipped up the steps in front of his father and mother. Their portmanteau remained behind, to go first of all to the Custom House, ere they could receive it.

The top of the steps was reached and the Lonsdales had just planted their feet upon the quay, when a hand was laid on Frederick's arm—and on his ears, as well as on those of his wife, fell the ominous words, "You are my prisoner!"

A shriek rose up to Lucy's lips—but with an almost preterhuman effort she kept it back; for quick as lightning did a sense of duty spring up in her mind—that duty which she, in her angel-character of a devoted and virtuous woman, was ever ready to perform; namely, the ministration of solace to her husband.

"I will go with you quietly," said Lonsdale to the constable; "and will reward you if you spare me any ignominy in the presence of this crowd:"—but the voice in which he spoke was the low deep tone of utter despair.

"I don't want to hurt your feelings more than I can help," replied the constable; at the same moment making a sign over his shoulder for two of his comrades, who were close at hand, to keep back. "So come along quick. I must take your arm though!"—to which of course Frederick was compelled to submit.

Fortunately the passengers who were landing at the time, were so busy in hurrying off to their homes or to hotels, or else to meet the friends assembled to receive them, that the arrest passed unnoticed by those around; and thus the unfortunate Lonsdales were spared the ignominy of becoming a mark for universal observation. Lucy—pale as death, but keeping back tears and sobs alike—clung to her husband's arms, which she pressed with even a convulsive violence, in mute entreaty that he would bear up against this frightful calamity. With her other hand she led the boy, who was intelligent enough to perceive that something was wrong; but what it was he of course could not possibly understand. The looks of his father and mother struck the poor little fellow with a dismay that prevented him from putting a single question; but when Lucy saw him glance upwards, half in fright and half in curiosity at her own and Frederick's counte-

nances, it was with a world of difficulty she could repress a violent outburst of rending anguish. What Lonsdale's feelings were, we must leave to the reader to imagine; we candidly confess that we have exhausted whatsoever power of language we may be enabled to wield in describing his emotions on former occasions when overtaken by calamity—so that we have no words left to convey an adequate idea of the sense of despair with which he received this withering blight that now fell upon his happiness and his heart.

"Where do you choose to be taken to?" asked the constable as they proceeded on their way. "There will be no coach till the afternoon up to London——"

"Who is at the Paris hotel?" demanded Lonsdale, feeling who the author of this atrocity was, and believing him to be there.

"Well," returned the man evasively, "you may just as well go to the Paris as anywhere else: for I see that you must be a person that has got money to spend."

Frederick made no answer. An awful stupor seized upon his brain; he appeared to be walking in a dream. They proceeded to the Paris Hotel; and on a word from the constable, a waiter showed them at once to a private room. Almost immediately afterwards the other two constables made their appearance; and one of them said to him who had taken Frederick into custody, "You must put on the handcuffs. He says that this is a slippery chap."

"He? To whom do you allude?" ejaculated our hero, starting up from the chair on which he had sunk down when entering that room. "Who is he? where is he? Tell him to come hither that I may sacrifice him to my vengeance!"

"Oh, my dearest husband!" cried Lucy, throwing her arms about his neck, and now bursting into a paroxysm of grief which could no longer be restrained: "I beseech and implore you to calm yourself!"

"Calm myself, Lucy!" echoed Lonsdale, a withering bitterness in his accents, and the direst vengeance in his looks; "as well bid the storms of heaven to be at peace! It is for you, my beloved one, that I feel thus deeply. O God! the anguish, the horror, the excruciation of all this!"—and sinking down again upon the chair from which he had so recently started up, the unhappy man covered his face with his hands and sobbed aloud.

The little boy climbed up on his father's lap, imploring him in piteous accents not to cry; and Lucy, falling upon her knees by her husband's side, in a broken voice, renewed her supplications that he would be calm. It was a scene of such bitter burning anguish that the constables themselves were for the instant moved; and they exchanged looks as much as to imply that they were sorry to be compelled to witness it.

"Well, I will be calm!" exclaimed Frederick with an abruptness that in itself was terrible—for it appeared as if his reason were suddenly touched; then, in a moment perceiving the horrified dismay that appeared on the coun-

tenances of his wife and child, he threw his arms round them both, caught them to his breast and covered them with kisses. His tears poured out freely; and he experienced some slight relief—or at all events, an abatement of the terrific excitement that a moment before had existed in his mind.

The constable who had arrested him, now slowly and somewhat hesitatingly produced from his pocket certain objects which sent forth an ominous metallic sound; and both Frederick and Lucy at once too well understood what they were. The little boy appeared to have some dim but terrible idea that “the wicked men,” as he called them, were about to put chains upon his father; and he looked on in speechless dismay. His beautiful countenance had lost its color; the child seemed pale, frightened, and ill—Oh, what a spectacle to harrow the minds of his parents!

“Five guineas,” said Lonsdale, “if you take me up to London without *those*.”

The officer glanced towards his companions, both of whom had placed their backs against the door; and one of them making a sign to the effect that he who held the handcuffs had better wait a moment, issued from the room. In a few minutes he returned, saying, “As we have got charge of the prisoner, it’s all at our own risk whether he escapes or not, so we can do as we like.”

The consequence was that, after a little negotiation, the constables agreed that, if the sum were doubled, they would not put on the handcuffs. Fortunately, the Lonsdales had come from Calais well provided with money: the ten guineas were paid down, and thus, for the present at least, was the unhappy man spared that fearful indignity, and his wife and child the anguish of seeing it inflicted.

“Will you permit me,” asked Lonsdale, “to be alone with my family for a little while? You can keep outside the door.”

This also was agreed to: and when the three constables had issued forth, there was a repetition of that anguished scene of embracing, and sobbing, and weeping, which we have just now described. But when the father and mother regained sufficient fortitude to enable them to look their hideous calamity in the face, and discuss what was to be done, they began to converse in whispering voices, in such a way that little Frederick might not overhear what they said.

“No, dearest Lucy,” remarked Lonsdale, “listen to what I am about to say; and I beseech you to be guided by my counsels, which are also my wishes. You know, dearest—alas, that I should be compelled to torture your heart by giving verbal expression to the horrible thing; but you know, dearest, that I have a fearful ordeal to pass through—a repetition of what I have already undergone! But you must not be present in the same town while that is taking place. No: for our child’s sake it must not be so! What I desire is this—that you return to Calais with little Frederick to-morrow, and that you take the necessary measures to sell off all that we possess there. This will occupy several days: you can then return

to England, and come on to Manchester. By the time you arrive there, all will be over. You understand me, dearest—and you will fulfil my wishes!”

“Yes, my beloved husband—you have but to express your desire and it becomes law for me. But, for heaven’s sake, do not abandon all hope—Oh! let me not see that bitter look upon your countenance!—it will haunt me like a horrible spectre when we are separated!”

“No, dearest—I will study to compose my feelings. But *you*, my beloved—will *you* promise that you will endeavor to do the same?”

“I will, I will: for each other’s sake must we do it!”—and then there were more embracings—and, alas, more weepings!

But we will not dwell any longer upon this sad, sad scene. Suffice it to say that the unfortunate family were left entirely to themselves until the departure of the night-coach up to London; and then the sadness of that scene became far sadder still in the moment of separation. Lucy felt as if the chords of her heart were being torn out of her—as if she were parting with life itself amidst rending agonies; but she suffered not all the extreme bitterness of her anguish to be betrayed by her looks. The poor child wept as if his little heart would break; and again and again were those last embraces renewed, ere Lonsdale could so far master his emotions and exercise his fortitude as to tear himself away from the beloved ones and rush from the room. Then Lucy, snatching up little Frederick in her arms, continued to weep over him long and plentifully, in the poignant crucifixion of her feelings.

Lonsdale entered the coach, and found that he was to be accompanied by two of the constables. The whole of the inside of the vehicle had, however, been engaged to insure the safe custody of the prisoner: three of the seats were already occupied by himself and the two constables—but who was to have the fourth? All doubt on that point, however, was speedily cleared up: for a person, muffled in a great coat, the long skirts of which trailed at his heels, came forth from the hotel, and with some degree of hesitation approached the door of the vehicle.

“Now, sir, jump in!” cried the guard, who was standing with the coach-door open in his hand; and at that instant the light of the lamp fell full upon the countenance of Obadiah Bates.

“You are sure he won’t do me a mischief?” he said to the constables, still hesitating to enter the coach.

“He has pledged himself to be perfectly quiet,” was the response. “If he isn’t, we must slip the darbies on.”

Bates accordingly entered the vehicle, and took the vacant place: the guard banged the door—and, leaping up behind, shouted “All right!”—whereupon the equipage rolled away from the front of the Paris Hotel.

Not a word was spoken until long after the stage was beyond the precincts of Dover; and then the barber, who had been fidgeting about for some minutes—evidently stirred by a



strong impulse to indulge in his garrulous propensity—remarked, “Well, I say, this job was done neat and clean, wasn’t it?”

“Are you addressing yourself to me?” demanded Lonsdale: for the interior of the coach being quite dark, he could not exactly perceive in which direction Bates was looking. But as he thus addressed that greatest of all miscreants, he felt the fury of a tiger springing up within him—a boiling rage—a terrible thirst for vengeance, such as he had never experienced in his life before.

“Well, I was speaking to anybody that chooses to listen,” answered Bates. “Come, Lonsdale, you must confess that you deserved this of me.”

“When I pledged myself to remain perfectly quiet,” replied Frederick, now experiencing a difficulty amounting almost to an excruciation to prevent himself from flying at the barber’s throat and throttling him, “I at least expected that every cause of irritation would be avoided.”

“Come, come, Mr. Bates,” said one of the constables, “it isn’t exactly fair.”

“Well, then, I won’t address myself to him:” and throughout the rest of the journey the barber kept his word.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE BRANDING.

It was a cold, dismal, drizzling evening, on the third day after the arrest at Dover, that the unhappy Frederick Lonsdale entered the town of Manchester in the custody of Bates and the two Dover constables. He had now the handcuffs on his wrists; but he was not altogether dispirited. There was a sinister gleaming in his eyes and a settled moodiness on his countenance, indicating full well that his mind, instead of being sunken into despondency, was at work with a frightful activity. He was, indeed, thinking of all his wrongs; and he could no more keep back a craving for vengeance than the mariner can repel the violence of the current which hurries him onward into the vortex of the Maelstrom. There was a project in Lonsdale’s mind which he fancied would—if carried out, and if his conjectures on a certain point were correct—afford him the means of inflicting a terrible punishment upon the author of his calamities. What his project was, and what our hero’s conjectures were, will transpire in due course.

On being delivered up at the barracks where his regiment was stationed, Lonsdale was consigned to the black-hole. It is not our purpose to linger upon this portion of our narrative: to do so, would be merely a repetition of what has been placed on record before. Suffice it to say, that a court-martial being duly summoned, Frederick was condemned to receive five hundred lashes—and in addition thereto, to be branded as a deserter! That he had rendered himself liable to this last mentioned horror, he all along too well knew: but never, when on the few occasions he and Lucy had, ere leaving

England for France, touched upon the eventualities which might arise from his detection, had he dropped a hint to her that there was a penalty provided by the remorseless tyranny of the military code in addition to the already sufficient atrocities of the lash. To be branded—Oh, it was indeed something frightful to contemplate!—and it was chiefly because he had apprehended this, that he counselled his wife to remain far away with their child until the measure of his punishment should be accomplished. But now he learnt to his dismay, that he would have to undergo the flogging first; and not till he was cured, would he be subjected to the process of branding. Reckoning that it would take full six weeks ere he could hope to issue from the infirmary, was he to keep Lucy away from Manchester the whole of the time? Yes—it was absolutely necessary to take this step: for he knew full well that it would drive her to despair if she learnt that when the demoniac tortures of the lash were over, he had yet to look forward to a punishment which, if far less painful, was if possible far more infamous.

The permission to write to a wife is seldom refused to a private soldier when on the eve of undergoing his punishment. He is looked upon as an individual who stands upon an abyss at the bottom of which is death; and he is therefore treated in some respects like the condemned felon awaiting the day of execution. Lonsdale obtained writing-materials; and in a letter full of mingled endearments and entreaties, he besought Lucy not to think of coming to Manchester until she received another communication from him to let her know when he was released from the infirmary. He reminded her how desirable it was that their son should remain in ignorance of the ignominy and the torture to which the father was to be subjected; and in order to keep the boy in this state of ignorance, it was requisite that he should see his sire at large the moment he set foot with his mother in Manchester. We need hardly state that Frederick’s letter abounded in tender assurances of his devoted love, and of such consolations as it was possible for him to impart under the distressing circumstances of the case.

On the following morning Frederick Lonsdale underwent the lacerations of the scourge in the presence of the entire regiment. Sergeant-Major Langley was in attendance, as on the former occasion; and under his directions there was no chance of the drummer-boys being permitted to spare the full vigor of their arms or the satanic powers of the lash. Without a murmur from the lips, but with rage in the heart and frenzy in the brain, did the unhappy Lonsdale receive the merciless infliction. Though the wounds of the former flagellation had long since been healed and the skin grown over them, yet was the whole of the back and the space extending round upon the ribs most painfully tender; and inasmuch as a field which has once been ploughed, is all the more easy to plough up again, so was it with the flesh of the unhappy Lonsdale. This time the very first blow fetched blood; and ere many were inflicted, the thongs of the accursed scourge began

to tear away the skin, cut up the flesh, and hack out morsels with a merciless execration. Again did many soldiers fall fainting from the ranks—and again did the officers look on, stern—implacable—unmoved, at the flaying process. But what words can convey even a tithe of all the mortal agonies that were endured by our unhappy hero beneath the ferocious lash? The sentence was that he should receive five hundred blows: every blow might be multiplied by nine; and thus when the punishment was over, he had in reality received four thousand and five hundred stripes! Take the agony which is endured by the victim when being scalped by the tomahawk of the Indian—take the ineffable pangs which are undergone by the writhing wretch when encircled by the compressing coils of one of Ceylon's mightiest snakes—take the execration that is experienced by the unfortunate being when the claws of a tiger have struck deep into his palpitating flesh—take the crucifying anguish of the bathing sailor when a shark seizes upon his limbs—take the fearful sufferings of the wretch enduring the process of impalement—take, we say, all these agonies—add to them whatsoever others the imagination can suggest—multiply them a thousand-fold—and then an idea may be formed of the hideous torture endured by Frederick Lonsdale on the occasion of this second punishment. And yet, as we have said, he bore it with a fortitude displaying the natural magnanimity of his soul; and by an almost incredible effort of his manly will, he suppressed the utterance of even a sigh or a murmur indicative of the agonies he was suffering. Yes—the whole sum of the five hundred lashes did he thus receive; and in a state of complete unconsciousness was he borne to the infirmary.

In the course of a few days he received a letter from Lucy. Like his own, it was full of expressions of tenderness and words of condolence; and it dutifully expressed the fair but unhappy writer's intention to abide by the counsels she had received from her husband. He wrote back to inform her that the punishment of the lash was over, and that the circumstance of his thus being able to respond to her epistle so soon, might convince her that, so far as his health was concerned, he was progressing as favorably as could be expected. He concluded by renewing his promise to write to her again the instant he should become aware of the day when he might hope for his discharge from the hospital. Again in a short time did he receive a letter from Lucy,—to the effect that she had already disposed of their goods in Calais, and that she was anxiously awaiting the much wished-for summons that would enable her to speed to Manchester. We need hardly say that her epistle was full of the tenderest condolences with her unhappy husband for the awful punishment he had received,—mingled likewise with fervid expressions of thanks to heaven that he had survived the diabolical torture. She said that little Freddy was constantly inquiring for his papa, and wished to know "what those wicked men had done to him?" Perhaps, in recording these little circumstances, Lucy went somewhat further than she would

have done had she been in a state of mind proper for calm deliberation; that is to say, she would have suppressed all mention of these traits of affection on the part of the child which could not do otherwise than excite the most painful feelings, in one sense, on the part of Lonsdale. Oh, that the beloved boy should have thus to inquire for his absent father!—oh, that a father should have to reflect that his very manhood had been flagrantly and utterly disgraced by an infamous punishment which dared not be whispered in the hearing of that child!

Weeks passed on—and there was a frequent interchange of letters between Frederick and Lucy. But our hero's recovery was slower on the present occasion than it was on the first: the wounds were deeper—the flaying of the skin was more extensive—the flesh was more completely cut up—the muscles and fibres were more softened and more thoroughly beaten into a greater degree of pulpiness, than had been the case at Portsmouth. He had literally been scourged to within an inch of his life. Oh, the misereants! And they would have affected to recoil in horror from the reading of a tale of the Russian knout. Maudlin sympathy! let us hear no more of the horrors of the Russian knout, so long as we have the horrors of the cat-o-nine-tails in our own land.

Two months elapsed from the date of the flogging, before the surgeon pronounced Frederick Lonsdale convalescent. The period was therefore now come when he was to undergo the remaining portion of his sentence. He had been advised by some of his humane comrades, whom he had met in the infirmary, or who visited him there, to petition Colonel Wyndham for a reprieve in respect to the branding; but while thanking his advisers for the good feeling which prompted this counsel, our hero steadily and sternly refused to seek a favor at the hands of any one of those whom he could not regard otherwise than as his enemies. It was on the morning of the 15th of March, 1835, that the regiment was drawn up in a square on the parade-ground—the same as if it were to witness the scourging process; and Lonsdale was marched forth from the infirmary to be branded as a deserter. He neither walked so erect as was his wont, nor with the same firmness of step: but it was not that his heart failed him—it was because he was still weak and feeble from the effects of the awful punishment he had received. Indeed, he was so emaciated—his countenance was so ghastly white—that he looked but the ghost of his former self. Still there was a stern decision in his eyes and in his compressed lips; and he exerted all his energy to surmount as much as possible the sense of enervation which bent his form somewhat, and rendered his pace slow and languid. Was there any pity felt for that unfortunate man as he thus painfully dragged himself towards the centre of the square? Yes: an illimitable compassion on the part of the private soldiers—but none on that of the officers, Lieutenant Heathcote alone excepted.

When stationed in the midst of the regiment, Lonsdale had again to submit to the



degradation of being stripped naked to the waist. The surgeon was present to superintend the branding process—not so much however in his medical character, as merely to instruct the drum-major, whose duty it was to operate, how to accomplish his task: for there was in reality no danger attending the process, and comparatively little pain—at least for one who had gone through the hideous exertions of the lash. But then the infamy,—Oh! it was *this*—it was *this*, that constituted the pain—the agony!

Our hero being stripped to the waist, as above stated, the drum-major dipped a camel's hair brush into a small bottle which had been furnished him, and which contained a thick black liquid. He then traced with his brush the letter **D** on Lonsdale's left side, two inches below the arm-pit, and upon a part which the scourge had cut up two months back, and which was only just skinned over. The letter itself was about an inch in length. The drum-major then took a small bottle of saddler's needles, three-sided and serrated: with these he pierced the skin all over the tracing of the letter, so as to draw blood—which heaven knows was easily done on that sore spot, which had so lately been flayed, ploughed, furrowed, hewed, and hacked, by the remorseless scourge! Lonsdale remained motionless as a statue—save perhaps in respect to a slight quivering of the lips and the eye-lids; for he felt that, even as in the lowest depth there is a deeper still, as that beyond the degradation of the cat-o'-nine-tails, there was the greater infamy of the brand. When the puncturing process was over, the drum-major took some gunpowder between his finger and thumb, and rubbed it in upon the wound for the purpose of rendering the mark indelible. The explanation of the process is this; that the charcoal of the gunpowder is forced into the small orifices punctured by the needles, and remains in the skin without festering after the wound has healed up: so that as a matter of course the black color of the charcoal renders the letter **D** not merely visible, but likewise indelible.

And there stood Lonsdale, enduring this crowning infamy—half-naked in the presence of his comrades—his back showing the deep red mark of the scourge which had lacerated it two months back!—there he stood, this unfortunate man—in a civilized country—in a land of Bibles and Missionary Societies—to have the mark of Cain affixed upon him! When the process was over, he was conducted back to the infirmary—there to remain until the wound should be completely healed, when he might resume his military duties. He learned from the surgeon that there was every reason to believe that he would quit the infirmary at the expiration of a week; and he therefore wrote to Lucy to tell her that she might now leave Calais and join him without delay. But did he acquaint his beloved wife with the circumstances of the branding infamy he had sustained?—No—not for worlds would he have plunged this additional dagger into a heart which was already deeply wounded!—and he hoped, considering the seclusion in which she

would live when arriving in Manchester, that not even a whisper of the hideous circumstance would reach her ears.

On the sixth day after the marking process Frederick was discharged from the infirmary. Before he returned to his quarters, he was summoned to the presence of Colonel Wyndham, with whom Adjutant Scott was seated at the time—while Sergeant-Major Langley was standing bold upright, in the “first position,” at a respectful distance from the table.

“Now then, Private Lonsdale,” said the Colonel, speaking coldly and sternly, “you are going back to your duties—and you had better take care of yourself; for I can tell you that you have a character to redeem—Do you think he'll ever redeem it, Langley?”

The sergeant-major shook his head ominously; and poor Lonsdale felt that he was like a dog to whom a bad name had been given, and who might be strung up off-hand without mercy and without pity. But he said nothing: his mood *then* was the sullenness of despair.

“Come, Scott,” resumed the Colonel, turning towards the Adjutant: “tell this fellow why he was sent for here.”

“Private Lonsdale,” said the officer thus addressed—speaking with business-like deliberation, and referring to a written memorandum at the same time—“you originally enlisted for seven years. Was it not so, Langley?”

“It was, sir,” responded the sergeant-major.

“Well, it appears, Private Lonsdale,” continued Mr. Scott, “that you enlisted on the 15th of May, 1828—and you deserted on the 24th of August of the same year. That made three months and one week of service. You were captured on the 10th of January, 1830; and you served up to the 23rd of August, 1832: that interval comprised a period that we will put down as nineteen months and a half. Then you deserted again—and you remained away until Dec. 31st, 1834, when you were captured at Dover. From that date until this day—March 22nd, 1835—is comprised a period of service that we will put down as two months and three weeks. Now, Langley—how do you make out these figures? am I right?”

“Perfectly so, sir,” responded the sergeant-major. “There's three periods of service, sir—the first, three months and a week—the second, nineteen months and two weeks—the third, two months and three weeks—altogether, twenty-five months and two weeks.”

“Or two years and six weeks,” interjected the Colonel.

“Now, then, Private Lonsdale,” resumed the Adjutant, “you understand for what purpose these calculations are made. You enlisted to serve—mind, to *serve*—for seven years. Your desertions count as nothing. You have served altogether two years and six weeks: you have therefore still to serve—how much do you make it, Langley?”

“Four years, ten months, and two weeks, sir,” was the sergeant-major's measured and accentuated response.

“Just so,” observed Colonel Wyndham, with a yawn: for he was already wearied of such a tedious mass of figures.

"You understand, then, Private Lonsdale," said Mr Scott: "you have nearly five years more to serve. And now you can retire."

Our hero did retire—and with a heart full of despair. Not that he had just learnt anything for which he was unprepared: he had previously known full well that he was liable to serve the entire period for which he had originally enlisted—and his Lucy was likewise aware of the same fact. But he was filled with despair because the treatment he had just experienced at the hands of his superiors was that of a cold brutality—a heartless aggravation of all the miseries he had endured. He saw that he was indeed a marked man—that no sympathy was felt towards him by his officers, even though he had paid the penalty of his offences—aye, and dreadfully paid it too!

On leaving the colonel's apartment, he hastened to get ready for parade, and appeared under arms for the first time since his return to the regiment. The cross-belts sat heavily upon him: his back was sore—he felt a pain in his loins—his lungs seemed affected. But when the parade was over, and his heavy accoutrements were thrown aside, he breathed more freely—his spirits rose somewhat, too—for he expected his beloved wife and child to arrive at Manchester in the evening. A lodging must be provided for them; and accordingly in the afternoon—when he had some few hours to dispose of—he sallied forth to make the requisite research. He soon found the accommodation he required: and having an ample supply of ready money, which he had brought with him from Dover, he was enabled to pay the rent in advance. In the evening he repaired to the particular stage by which he had directed Lucy to come; and when it drove up to the door, he had the satisfaction of perceiving his beloved wife and little son amongst the passengers. In a few moments our hero and heroine were clasped in each other's arms; and Lucy, forgetting at the instant that her unfortunate husband's back must be sore, clasped him with an energy of tenderness that made him writhe in that embrace. But in the fulness of her emotions at that first instant of meeting, she observed it not; or else, Oh! what a bitter, bitter pang it would have sent like a barbed arrow to her heart's core! Little Frederick had been previously informed by his mamma that his father was now a soldier; and therefore the child was not amazed to see his parent in a uniform. On the contrary he was delighted; and fervid indeed was the embrace in which he was strained by that affectionate father.

A porter being procured to convey Lucy's boxes, the little party proceeded along the street to the house in which the lodging was engaged, and which was at no great distance. While repairing thither arm-in-arm, the husband and wife could not help noticing the great change which had taken place in each other during the three months which had now so nearly elapsed since they parted. The reader is already aware that Frederick was pale and emaciated, and he still walked painfully and languidly. Lucy was likewise pale

and much care worn: indeed her countenance but too evidently betrayed the immensity of the grief which she had experienced during the interval of separation. Both studiously endeavored to conceal from each other how much they were shocked at observing these changes in their appearance; and not a syllable was spoken in respect to the awful punishment that Frederick had endured.

It was a spacious and airy bedroom which Lonsdale had hired—ready furnished—in a respectable house, but in a somewhat secluded street; and as he had given the landlady instructions to purchase such necessities as were required for immediate use, the materials for a comfortable repast were found ready on their arrival at the lodging. Lucy, truly rejoiced to be restored to her husband, manifested as much cheerfulness as under circumstances was possible: but Frederick was unable to cast off a certain gloom which appeared to have fastened its shade upon his countenance and settled its influence upon his heart. The child, too young to notice the altered appearance of his father, or to perceive that there was aught of moodiness hanging upon his spirits—and delighted to be in his father's presence once again,—played about the room in a frolicsome manner, every now and then climbing upon Lonsdale's knees, throwing his arms about his neck, and kissing him affectionately.

On the following day Frederick and Lucy held a deliberation upon their affairs. The furniture which they had originally purchased in Calais for seventy pounds, had realized fifty on being sold; and this was the best bargain that Lucy was able to make. But altogether they could command about sixty pounds. The reader may perhaps wonder why Frederick did not make up his mind to leave his regiment again as soon as possible and flee back to France—there to remain for ever, with the fixed determination of allowing no pretext or stratagem to seduce him again to his native land. But no: he had not now the energy sufficient for this. His nature was already undergoing a change: he looked upon the whole world with distrust: he felt as if his was an evil destiny, which he must irresistibly fulfil. But he did not state all this to Lucy. He had still a boundless love for her,—and also for their child: so that if he did not hint at another desertion, neither did he give his reason for not attempting it; and Lucy of course did not breathe a syllable bordering upon such a suggestion. She reminded Frederick that when at Portsmouth she had comfortably sustained herself by means of needle-work, and she thought of having recourse to the same pursuit again. With a portion of their ready money, furniture might be bought for two little rooms; and thus a saving in the rental be effected. But, on the other hand, it was by no means certain that the regiment would remain long in Manchester; and if it were suddenly or speedily removed, the furniture would have to be re-sold at a considerable loss. Therefore, all things considered, it was resolved that Lucy should continue to occupy the present lodging.—Fre-



derick suggesting that when in a few weeks' time her health, which had recently suffered much, should be completely restored, she might carry out the other part of her plan and procure needle-work.

"And now," he observed, when the discussion of their affairs was over, "I am going to tell you, my dear Lucy, what I purpose to do. I intend to write to the Postmaster-General, and inform him that I have every reason to believe the villain Bates opens the letters which pass through his hands. How could he have known we were at Calais, unless he had opened that letter which you had penned to your father?"

"Oh! fatal, fatal letter!" ejaculated Lucy: "would to heaven I had never written it!"

"Do not blame yourself, my dearest wife," responded her husband: "you have no need to do so. But to return to what I was saying. That letter which deluded us away from Calais, could only have been written by some person who had read the one which you addressed to your father. We know that Bates must have tampered with the correspondence between Gerald Redburn and your father seven years ago—or else he could not have written that letter to Sergeant Langley which made me aware of what was going on. Oh! to be revenged upon that villain—to be revenged upon him—Oh, it will prove the sweetest moment of my life!"

Our hero spoke with a sudden access of bitterness that positively frightened Lucy. She started—she gazed in wild and anguished dismay upon him: for there was something of almost fiend-like implacability in his words and his looks at that instant.

"Much as we have suffered—deeply as *you* have suffered, my beloved husband," she said at length giving utterance to her feelings—and she spoke in a low tremulous voice as she looked up with plaintive earnestness into his countenance—"yet revenge is an evil sentiment to cherish. Oh, Frederick! I beseech you—I beseech you to banish it from your heart—that heart which is so good, so magnanimous!"

"That *was*, you mean, Lucy!" he exclaimed: "but it is warped—cruelly warped towards all the world, except yourself and our dear child."

"Oh! say not so—speak not thus, dear Frederick," murmured Lucy, now stricken with the saddest presentiments. "At all events do nothing rashly: take time to reflect—Your mind," she continued hesitatingly, "will soon recover a healthier tone—"

"Lucy!" suddenly interrupted our hero, "I have suffered enough to change the nature of a saint! It is not alone for myself that I feel so deeply: it is for you and our dear child that I have thus suffered. Oh! when I think of the happy home which we so recently possessed—of the security in which we dwelt—and then of the unparalleled treachery which lured us thence, it is enough to drive me mad—My God, it is enough to drive me mad!"

"Frederick, I beseech you not to talk thus," said Lucy, unable to restrain the tears that were pouring down her cheeks. "What can I say—what can I do to comfort you?—Oh, what can I do?"

The boy, who had hitherto been playing at the farther end of the room, now timidly approached his parents: for he thought that they were quarrelling—although he had never in his life seen the slightest dispute arise between them. But the supposition was new natural enough on his part, as he could not possibly comprehend wherefore they were thus speaking in so excited a manner.

"My dear child," exclaimed Lucy, snatching him up in her arms, "do not look thus sorrowful."

"But papa was scolding you," he said, beginning to cry.

"No, no—your papa *never* scolded me!" and at this assurance the little fellow's countenance brightened up.

"We must talk this matter over alone, Lucy," said Lonsdale, having caressed his little son. "Take him to the woman of the house for a few minutes, and let her buy him a toy."

The child was thus disposed of for a little while; and when Lucy returned to the chamber, she found her husband pacing to and fro in a moody manner, with his arms folded across his chest. He did not immediately perceive her re-appearance; and her ear caught an ejaculation which fell half subdued from his lips, and which sent a fresh thrill of anguished presentiment through her heart.

"The miscreant—I will be avenged, I will be avenged!"—such were the words which Lucy had thus caught; and almost immediately afterwards Frederick saw that she had come back. "Now, my dear wife," he continued, taking her hand and pressing it in his own, "you must permit me to have my way in this. I feel that the only solace to my wounded spirit will be the punishment of that remorseless villain. Surely, surely, *you*, dear Lucy, must hate him as I do?"

"If he came starving to our door," she responded, "I do believe that I should have the courage to refuse him a morsel of bread: and still I have not the heart—forgive me for saying so, dear Frederick—to take steps of my own accord to involve a fellow-creature in ruin. I am sure that when the sense of bitter suffering has somewhat yielded to the lapse of time on your part—for time *has* a healing influence—"

"Oh! there are some wounds," ejaculated Frederick, "which time can never heal! But pray, dear Lucy, think not the worse of me if I persist in doing that which an unconquerable impulse urges me to accomplish."

"I will say no more, my dear husband," she rejoined: but it was with a profound mournfulness alike of tone and voice that she spoke.

Lonsdale hastened to take writing materials; and seating himself at the table, he penned a letter to the Postmaster-General, expressing a conviction, from various circumstances which had come to his knowledge, that Obadiah Bates, of the post-office at Oakleigh, was accustomed to violate the sanctity of the correspondence passing through his hands. Lucy watched her husband with the most painful feelings as he penned this letter. She saw that he gloated over the work he was doing; and when she reflected how changed his nature

must be to permit so vindictive a sentiment to harbor in his breast, she shuddered with a recurrence of that vague misgiving which had already smitten her in respect to the future. The letter was folded up and addressed: and Frederick sallied forth to take it to the post-office. Then Lucy hurried down stairs—fetched up her little son—and covered him with the most passionate kisses as she led him up to the chamber.

## CHAPTER XXV.

MR. ROSSER.

It was about a fortnight after our hero's letter to the Postmaster-General had been despatched from Manchester, that Mr. Obadiah Bates repaired at about nine o'clock in the evening to the Royal Oak. A long, long time had elapsed since he had joined the company in the parlor of that little hostelry, as he had been wont to do when first introduced to our readers. But on this particular evening Mr. Bates was seized with an unusual fit of boldness. Not that he was ever deficient in effrontery: but still he had not chosen voluntarily to encounter the cold and distant looks of his fellow-tradesmen of the village. It may therefore be properly defined an access of more than his wonted impudence which induced him on this occasion to bend his way towards Bushell's. Perhaps it was that he had taken an extra drop of spirits in his own dwelling on that particular evening: or perhaps it was because he had treated himself to a new suit of clothes, which the village tailor had made for him; and he was not only desirous of showing them off, but he likewise fancied that the said tailor, who was sure to be at the Royal Oak, could not possibly give him the cold shoulder after the fulfillment of such an order.

"Besides," said Bates to himself, as he walked along, "this ill-feeling towards me can't last for ever: but how is it to be put a stop to, unless I do something to appease the minds of all these fellows? Here have I been regularly cut, as one may say—and I can't bear it any longer. I will go up boldly to the Oak—take my four penn'orth of gin and my screw of bakker—and see what they will say. A man like me isn't to be crushed. If they have any of their nonsense, perhaps I can drop a hint or two about their private affairs that will rather astonish them; and if that don't bring them over into a better humor, I'm sure I don't know what the deuce will."

By the time he had finished this soliloquy, the Royal Oak was reached; and Mr. Bates, flicking his hat jauntily over his right ear, and sniffing to catch the fragrance of the exquisite bears' grease (made from lard) which anointed his locks and whiskers, walked boldly into the little parlor. Several of the village tradesmen were assembled, drinking their ale and smoking their pipes; while old Bushell occupied his usual seat at the chimney-corner; though there was no fire in the grate—for it was the month of April, and the Spring weather was mild. There was also an individual, who, it appeared,

had arrived at Oakleigh that evening by the carrier's van from Middleton. He was a tall man—nearly six feet in stature, and bulky in proportion. His age might be about fifty: his hair, of an iron gray, was short and crisped; and on the upper part of his forehead there was a long red scar evidently produced by a terrific wound. He was dressed in a black body-coat and waistcoat, drab breeches, and top-boots. He had a heavy look: yet there were moments when his eyes would twinkle with an exceeding sharpness; and there was a sort of pricking-up of the ears when any one began to speak after a pause in the discourse. This person who had given the name of Mr. Rosser, was smoking his pipe, and doing ample justice to a quart-pot of Mr. Bushell's excellent ale.

"Well, Mr. Bates," said the landlord, who always made it a rule to be civil to everybody, and never mixed himself up in the village quarrels,—“you are quite a stranger amongst us. I am very glad to see you.”

"I hope others are too," replied the barber, glancing around upon the company: then taking his seat, he said, "Landlord, order me four penn'orth of gin—cold without—and a screw."

The village tradesmen,—including Mr. Mumery the baker, concerning whose remittance to his brother-in-law at Carlisle Mr. Bates had well nigh got himself into such serious trouble, looked particularly cold and glum as the barber made his appearance. Two or three "hems" and short coughs were given—several significant looks were exchanged—and then divers faces were half buried in pewter measures, as if to conceal or subdue emotions. Mr. Rosser likewise took a long draught from his own quart-pot, over the rim of which he eyed Mr. Bates very attentively, without however appearing to do so.

"What is that person?" whispered the barber to old Bushell.

"He is staying at the house: he came from Middleton this evening, and says he has got some business down in these parts. I don't know what he is. He looks like a farmer—and yet he doesn't, somehow or another."

"Well, he has an orkard cut over his forehead, at all events," said Bates, gliding back to his seat, which he had for a moment quitted to question Mr. Bushell. "Now, gentlemen," he continued, looking around upon the assembled tradesmen, "you needn't seem so precious distant: I haven't brought the plague with me—and I do think you have made a dead set against me quite long enough."

"Well, I do think Mr. Bates has been somewhat harshly treated," said the village tailor: then in a whisper to the individual who sat next to him, he added, "Come, Beagley, don't look so cold at him. I made him them clothes—and he paid me quite honorable."

"You see, gentlemen," resumed the barber, "you tried to get a new hairdresser into the village about seven years ago: but you couldn't manage it. Nobody would come in opposition to me; and though some of you do go over to Middleton to get your hair cut, yet there's a



many of you still obliged to come to me—and I may add triumphantly, that the sale of my superfine bear's-grease has scarcely fallen off."

"I tell you what it is, Mr. Bates," said Mr. Sheepwash, who considered himself a very excellent speaker, "I say it for myself—and when I say it for myself, I mean that I am speaking on my own account individually, and not collectively,—leastways as a humble inhabitant of this here village—and it may be that I am expressing the opinions of other honorable gentlemen which is now present,—I say therefore, Mr. Bates, that there wouldn't be no objection to you if so be you would just clear up them little suspicious things which is floating about in men's minds agin you!"

"What suspicious things?" demanded Bates, with matchless effrontery, though he had no difficulty in guessing the subject of Mr. Sheepwash's allusion.

"Why, I mean," responded this erudite personage—"and when I say I mean, it is that I want you to understand—leastways to comprehend—both on my part and on the part of the honorable gents which I behold around me on this memorable occasion, that it's vispered—and when I say vispered, I mean it's spoke out aloud, that you, Mr. Bates, should have tampered with the violability of correspondence passed through your hands."

"Then I say it's a lie!" ejaculated the barber, striking his clenched fist upon the table, so that every one of the pewter pots and glasses performed a pirouette at the imminent risk of upsetting. "Who accuses me?"

"I do," said Mr. Mummery, the baker, laying down his pipe and looking awfully stern.

"Well, but about that there fifty pound-note," said the barber, nothing discomfited, "I had to pay it, and that shows I was an honest man. But who knows that you, Mummery, ever put it into the letter?"

"How comed it," asked Mummery, "that long before I paid my brother-in-law back that money, you, Mr. Bates, went whispering about in Oakleigh to whoever would listen to you, that I had borrowed it! How did you know this, I say?" asked the baker, waxing wrathful, "unless you had opened some of the letters that had passed betwixt me and my brother-in-law?"

"Oh! them kind of things," answered Bates, with a contemptuous toss of the head, "soon get wind!"—and then he added maliciously, "When people passes themselves off as being warm and well-to-do when they're nothing of the sort, they can't keep the mask on their faces long."

"But I want to know now," spoke Mr. Judkins, who was a mean-looking man, "how it was, Mr. Bates, that you came to learn about my writing to the mercer at Middleton for a little accommodation in the shape of credit, such as all merchants want now and then? I know for a fact you spoke of it in your shop, and I can bring witnesses to prove it."

"Come, Bates," chimed in Mr. Whippersnapper, who had recently opened a little haberdashery shop in the village, and who was a busy, bustling, quick-speaking man, very short, very thin, very volatile, and ever starting as

constantly receiving galvanic shocks,—**"come, Bates—this wont do, Bates—it's not right, Bates—you don't meet the question fair, Bates—it looks queer, Bates—I'd stick up for you if I could, Bates—but I can't, Bates—and that's all about it, Bates."**

"But I want to know," said Mr. Clegg, a short savage-looking man, with very long features, and a sepulchral voice, "how it was that you found out I had the misfortune to have a bill protested at Middleton? You told Sir Archy Redburn of it six months ago; and the Baronet told Davis to look precious sharp after my rent in consequence. Now, sir, will you explain *that* matter?"

"Yes, now—come explain it, Bates," ejaculated Mr. Whippersnapper. "You must explain it, Bates—you can't get off it, Bates—out it must come, Bates—there's no use shilly-shallying, Bates—we're down upon you, Bates—and no mistake, Bates—I can tell you, Bates."

"Well, since we are talking on these things," exclaimed Mr. Pocock, another of the guests: "I have got a question to put to Mr. Bates, and I should like him to tell me how it was he found out that I had quarrelled with my father-in-law at Coventry—and how one day a letter I had from my father-in-law came to be sealed with two different colored waxes? Why, I showed the letter to friend Tripes here; and it was as clear as daylight! There was the red wax over the blue, quite plain."

"Ah! Bates—it begins to look queer, Bates, precious queer, Bates," again chimed in Mr. Whippersnapper. "What about the father-in-law, Bates—and the quarrel, Bates—and telling friend Tripe about it, Bates—that's the worst point, Bates—telling friend Tripes, Bates—it don't look well, Bates—what made you tell friend Tripes, Bates?"

"Now, Mr. Bates," resumed Mr. Sheepwash, "you have heard what these honorable gents have to say on the subject; and when I observe you have heerd what they say, I mean what I say—leastways that you've listened to them accusations. But it's my dooty to put a question to you; and when I say a question, I mean a somethin that wants a answer, leastways a reply. Why was it you was had up to London to see the Postmaster-General—or leastways the General Postmaster—in the hautumn of last year? Wasn't it about a bank-note as was missing out of a letter sent to our friend Mr. Brogden, who I do not see here this evening—and when I say I don't see him here, I mean that he's not present—leastways that he isn't with us on this highly important occasion."

"That's it, Sheepwash—you've done it well, Sheepwash," cried Mr. Whippersnapper: "you've hit him hard, Sheepwash—put it in a nut-shell, Sheepwash—not a word too much, Sheepwash—not a word too little, Sheepwash. Come, Bates, no more nonsense, Bates—stand up, Bates—meet your accusers, Bates—look 'em in the face, Bates—like a man, Bates—or it's all dickey with you, Bates—I can tell you, Bates."

And indeed Mr. Whippersnapper seemed to have spoken the exact truth: for all eyes were

turned upon the barber in anxious expectation of the responses he would give to the charges levelled against him. He had listened to them with a mingled superciliousness and effrontery, as if the subject matter of discourse was either beneath his notice, or else involving points so easy of refutation, that he could afford to take his time over the affair. Even Mr. Rosser, although a perfect stranger in Oskleigh, seemed to be interested in the proceeding, and listened with silent attention,—pricking up his ears, however, each time a fresh accuser spoke out. But ere Mr. Bates condescended to open his lips, another visitor entered the parlor—and this was Mr. Davis, Lucy's father.

"Good evening, sir," said Bushell, officiously bustling to place a chair for the bailiff. "Come to take your usual evening's whiff along with us, sir?"

"Mr. Davis," observed Sheepwash, "has been a great acquisition among us for the last two or three months; and when I say an acquisition, I mean a wallyable addition—leastways, a gentleman whose company is much esteemed. Your health, Mr. Davis."

"Ah," said the bailiff, in bitter accents, "one is sometimes glad to drop in when there's a little pleasant society. Bushell, give me some hot brandy-and-water and a pipe."

"Poor fellow!" whispered the tailor to Mr. Beagley: "he's terribly hen-pecked at home. Ah! it was a sad day for Davis when he married Colycynth's daughter."

"And I say, Bushell—while you're about it, Bushell," vociferated Mr. Whippersnapper, "order me another sixpenn'orth, Bushell—gin, Bushell—hot, Bushell—with a squeeze of lemon, Bushell—and plenty of sugar, Bushell—and I say, Bushell—order me another serew at the same time, Bushell—and a clean clay, with a sealing-wax at the top, Bushell—there's a good fellow, Bushell."

The bailiff's and the haberdasher's orders were soon executed; and then there was a brief pause—during which Mr. Sheepwash appeared to be collecting matter for a fresh speech.

"Oh, Mr. Bates! I see you here, do I?" suddenly exclaimed Mr. Davis, glancing around the room when he had lighted his pipe.

"Yes—I've just dropped in to take my four penn'orth," responded the barber. "The fact is, I thought there had been enough ill-will towards me for the last few years in the village; and I wanted to see whether these gentlemen which call themselves Christians and is regular at Church on Sundays, mean to keep up their spite in respect to your humble servant forever. And now that I come in a friendly way amongst them, they trump up no end of lies about me—as if th' character of Obadiah Bates was a football to be kicked about in the dirt from one to another. However, as they've all made their charges, I'll answer them in a lump."

"Bravo, Bates—well done, Bates—go it, Bates—that's what I call plucky, Bates!" exclaimed Mr. Whippersnapper. "You've come out stroug, Bates—answer all their charges, Bates—and put yourself right, Bates—fire away, Bates—that's your sort, Bates."

"Well, then, gentlemen," resumed the barber,

anazed by this running fire of compliments on the part of one who had hitherto seemed an enemy, "I will answer these charges in a lump."

"Stop!" ejaculated Davis. "Perhaps you will answer mine, Mr. Bates, at the same time along with the lump," he added, in tones bitterly sarcastic. "I want to know, Mr. Bates, how it is that you have spread abroad reports that Mrs. Davis has run into debt with milliners and dressmakers at Middleton, and that they had written to ner to threaten to address themselves to me unless she paid them their accounts? I want to know that, Mr. Bates! But perhaps I should do well to be more explicit still—so that you shan't have a loophole of escape. This daw I learn for the first time that such letters *have* been written to my wife from the Middleton tradesmen. It came to my knowledge in an indirect way, and I taxed her with it. She then confessed that she had received such letters, but that she had burnt them all, and not mentioned the thing to a soul. Now then, I want to know how the business could possibly have got abroad?"

"Oh! I heard all about it at Middleton, when I was over there t'other day," exclaimed Bates in an off-hand manner: "the tradesmen made no secret of it."

"That's false!" exclaimed Davis. "I myself have been this day to Middleton to settle all these accounts, and I know for a fact the tradesmen did *not* speak of it—but showed the greatest forbearance and delicacy. But my wife told me she had reason to believe that some of those letters she received had been opened while passing through the post-office. And the Middleton tradesmen told me this very day that some of the letters *they* received in reply from my wife, had been tampered with. Now, Mr. Bates, when I find that you spread those reports abroad about Mrs. Davis's extravagance, and considering that you hold the post-office here, and have been in trouble more than once about letters here,—I have good reason to accuse you of having played very dirty tricks about the correspondence between Mrs. Davis and the Middleton tradesmen."

"I deny it, sir!" exclaimed the barber: "and I defy anybody to say that black's the white of my eye."

"Hullo, Bates—that won't do, Bates!" cried Mr. Whippersnapper, deprecatingly. "Things are looking bad, Bates—precious bad, Bates—they've took a turn against you, Bates—you don't come up to the scratch, Bates—you're in a corner, Bates—it won't do, Bates—I can tell you, Bates."

"Gentlemen," resumed Davis, "it's a very sad thing to have to talk in a public room of one's domestic affairs: but I am not such a fool as to suppose that my unhappiness at home is any secret here. In fact," he added bitterly, "I don't want it to be. I married a young wife—and I have been terribly punished for it. But I repeat that Mr. Bates has violated correspondence; and I appeal to you, gentlemen, whether Obadiah Bates is a fit and proper person to hold the post-office any longer!"

"I propose," said Mr. Sheepwash, "that a



committee of five be appointed to investigate the matter; and when I say a committee, gentlemen, I mean that three is to form a quorum—leastways, that they shall be eligible to deliberate. And I beg to propose farther, that our respected friend Mr. Beagley be one of the said committee; and when I say Mr. Beagley, I mean a gentleman which is known to you all—because you all know him—a gentleman whose virtues is emblazoned in the hearts of all present—a gentleman—”

This magnificent speech, during the delivery of which Mr. Beagley sat in modest confusion, was interrupted by the sounds of an equipage dashing up to the front of the Royal Oak; and had it not been for this incident, heaven alone can tell how many more compliments Mr. Sheepwash would have passed upon his honorable friend Mr. Beagley. Bushell rushed from the room; and Bates, always excessively curious and inquisitive, sprang from his seat, raised the blind, and peeped from the window.

“It’s Sir Archibald’s carriage!” he ejaculated. “I wonder what he can want down here at ten o’clock in the evening.”

Mr. Rosser, who had not opened his lips throughout the preceding colloquy on the part of the company, laid down his pipe—emptied his quart-pot—and then wiped his mouth with the sleeve of his coat. Almost immediately afterwards, Bushell returned to the room, saying, “Mr. Rosser, Sir Archibald Redburn is desirous of speaking to you.”

The individual thus addressed,—and who had evidently expected the summons the moment he learnt from Bates’s ejaculation whose the equipage was,—rose from his seat, and issued from the parlor, Bushell showing him the way to the room where Sir Archibald Redburn was waiting. In a few moments the landlord re-appeared, and resumed his seat and his pipe.

“Who can this Mr. Rosser be?” exclaimed Mr. Judkins, the affair of Bates and the post-office being for the instant laid aside. “Perhaps he is come to bid for the Burnside Farm, that fell vacant t’other day. You must know, Mr. Davis?”

“It’s not that, I’m sure,” responded the bailiff, “for the farm was let yesterday. I know no more who this Mr. Rosser is than you do; but I am certain that he has not come to Oakleigh to be a tenant of the Baronet’s—for, if so, I should have been sure to hear of it.”

“Then who *can* he be!” cried Mr. Judkins.

The door now opened again; and Sir Archibald Redburn made his appearance, closely followed by Mr. Rosser. All the company laid down their pipes, and rose from their seats out of respect to the great man, who, condescendingly waving his hand, said, “Pray, take your chairs—don’t let me disturb you. Ah! Davis—are you here? Why, I thought you never came to the Oak of an evening?” added Sir Archibald, with a smile.

“I am not happy at home, sir,” was the response bitterly given.

“So much the worse,” observed the Baronet: then as his looks suddenly became stern and severe, he bent his eyes upon the barber, saying, “Mr. Bates, a letter was posted to me in

London three days ago. It has been traced as far as the Oakleigh post-office. That letter contained nothing but a five-pound note, without the slightest information from whom it came. It has not been delivered to me. Where is it, sir?”

“A letter, Sir Archibald?” echoed Bates, affecting the utmost surprise. “You had all your letters, sir, sent up regularly yesterday and to-day, as usual; and so that one must have been amongst them.”

“No, Mr. Bates—it was *not*,” replied the Baronet, looking as if he meant to penetrate the starveling barber through and through with his glances. “The number of the note was 21795.”

“Eh—what?” suddenly ejaculated the tailor: and pulling out an old greasy pocket-book, he drew forth, from amidst a motley assemblage of cloth and waistcoat patterns, measures, and dirty scraps of memoranda, a bank-note at which he glanced for a moment. “Why, here it is! Number 21795—the very identical one! And it was you, Bates, that paid it to me for the suit of clothes you’ve got on your back. If the note’s a stolen one, give me back the clothes: I’ll strip ‘em off you. Five pounds! why, it’s enough to ruin me quite, and send me on the parish!”

Sir Archibald’s accusation—the barber’s ready denial—and the tailor’s excitement and volubility, all combined to produce an immense sensation in the little parlor of the Royal Oak. But we should observe that Mr. Rosser leant calmly with his back against the door, and with his hands in his pockets, appearing to be looking up at the ceiling—though in reality he had his twinkling eyes fixed upon Bates. The barber himself was confounded by the exposure so suddenly made by the tailor, who, he had doubtless flattered himself, had omitted to observe the number of the bank-note.

“Now, officer, do your duty!” said Sir Archibald, in a stern voice.

Thereupon Mr. Rosser advanced towards the barber; and seizing him by the collar, said, “You are my prisoner!”

“For God’s sake, Sir Archibald—good, kind Sir Archibald—don’t do this!” almost shrieked forth the wretched Bates, his effrontery completely abandoning him. “It will be the ruin of me!”

“Silence, sir! you are a villain!” ejaculated the Baronet. “It was through me you obtained the post-office—and you have scandalously violated your trust. Officer, away with him! My carriage is at your service to convey your prisoner across to the jail at Middleton.”

“First and foremost, if you please, Sir Archibald, we will search the fellow,” said Mr. Rosser: and thereupon he plunged his hands into the barber’s pockets, the unhappy man himself not offering the slightest resistance. “What have we here?” continued the officer, drawing forth an envelope. “Why, actually the fool has not had the precaution to destroy the very letter I posted myself in London to you, Sir Archibald, and which contained the bank-note!”

If any evidence were wanting in addition to that which the tailor had afforded, it was now

found: and Bates's guilt was placed beyond the possibility of doubt. He was as pale as death,—quivering from head to foot, and throwing his half-frightened half-appealing looks around.

"All up, Bates—all up, Bates," whispered Mr. Whippersnapper to the discomfited barber. "Won't do, Bates—precious scoundrel, Bates—you'll be transported for it, Bates—as sure as you're alive, Bates—serves you 'right, Bates—no pity for you, Bates—none whatever, Bates."

"Come, hold your chattering," growled Mr. Rosser to the little linendraper, who thereupon shrunk back in an instant.

"You must give the officer that bank-note," said the Baronet to the tailor: "it is a link in the chain of evidence."

"But who is to pay me for the scoundrel's clothes?" vociferated the unfortunate sufferer.

"Oh! you must manage as best you can," returned Sir Archibald drily. "Now, take him off, Mr. Rosser."

The officer speedily settled with Mr. Bushell the amount of his reckoning; and wishing the Baronet and the assembled company good night, bore his prisoner away to the carriage. The tailor rushed after them to beg and beseech that Bates might be taken home first, to put on an old suit of clothes and surrender up the new ones; but Mr. Rosser gruffly replied that he had no time for such nonsense—and the equipage drove away, leaving the discomfited tailor bitterly bewailing his loss. Sir Archibald returned on foot to the Manor; and the village tradesmen, together with Mr. Davis, remained until a late hour at the Royal Oak, discussing the incident which had occurred. When the party broke up, the bailiff was far overcome with liquor, and in this condition he staggered home, where a violent altercation took place between himself and his wife.

When the Spring assizes were held in the county a fortnight afterwards, Obadiah Bates was placed in the dock, charged with stealing a letter containing a five-pound Bank of England note, the property of the Postmaster-General. Mr. Rosser, who appeared as a witness, stated that he was a Bow Street officer, and that in consequence of certain information he had received from the Post-Office authorities in London, he posted a letter, containing a five-pound note, the number of which he took, addressing the letter to Sir Archibald Redburn, whom he had previously ascertained to be the nearest justice of the peace in the neighborhood of Oakleigh. He likewise took means to make Sir Archibald acquainted with what was being done, and the object thereof. As had been anticipated, the prisoner Obadiah Bates intercepted the letter, and purloined the bank-note. The tailor,—for whom, we should observe, a subscription had been raised amongst the tradesmen of Oakleigh,—likewise attended at the trial; and he proved that the prisoner had paid him the particular bank-note alluded to, for a suit of clothes. The evidence was complete against Bates; and he was sentenced to transportation for fourteen years.

A few days afterwards—just before the order arrived at the prison for removing the convicts

away to the sea port whence a ship was to sail for Botany Bay,—the barber received the following letter:—

"Manchester, May 6th, 1835.

"I have read in the newspapers the particulars of your trial and condemnation. I am thus avenged for the bitter wrongs you have wrought against me; for it was I who gave the Post-Office authorities that information in pursuance of which they acted. You are going to a penal clime where you will work in chains for fourteen years. I have been reading accounts of the horrors to which transports are subjected, that I might glean an idea of the hideous sufferings which are in store for you. I gloat over your position. Would that circumstances permitted me to visit you in your dungeon, and behold the wretched spectacle that your appearance must present! Misereant that you are! you have persecuted me with the most unrelenting bitterness. Twice have you ruined my fairest prospects. Twice have you been the cause that I was subjected to a horrible punishment. Nay, more,—it is through you that I bear upon my body the brand of a deserter—that brand which is indelible! But upon you a brand equally indelible is now set—the brand of a felon's infamy! I have undergone the tortures of the lash: but they are over now. My punishment is past: yours is about to commence—and it will endure for fourteen long years. Not a day will pass that I shall not think of you. But flatter not yourself it will be with commiseration or sympathy. No: it will be with a fiendish delight—heaven pardon me for saying so—to reflect that you are enduring the horrors of transportation. Mine was a generous heart: through your villainy it has been warped. Mine were noble feelings; through your hideous treachery they have been destroyed. Oh, it is no light thing for any individual to be the cause of making such a wreck of a fellow-creature! But if my sufferings have been great, yours will be horrible; if your perfidy has been vile the punishment will at least be commensurate.

"Go, monster that you are!—go to the land of your exile and your misery! *There*, when working in chains—in that cesspool of English crime—when smarting under the blow of a heartless overseer—when drenched with the heavy rains, or fainting beneath the intensity of the heat—when half starving upon the most nauseous fare—when subjected to the ill-treatment, the gibes, and the curses of your felon-companions—when in the bitterness of your mental agony calling upon heaven to send you death as a relief, because, coward that you are! you will not dare to escape by suicide from that earthly hell to which you are going—when, I say, you are passing through that pandemonium of tortures—*then* think of the man, his wife, and his child, whom you were twice the means of snatching from a happy home and plunging into the vortex of misery. Go, reptile!—I can waste no more words upon you!

"FREDERICK LONSDALE."

Such was the letter that Obadiah Bates received in the gaol at Middleton, a few days after his condemnation.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE BAILIFF'S WIFE.

SHORTLY after Bates's trial Gerald Redburn arrived at the Manor to pass a few weeks with his parents. During the seven years which had now nearly elapsed since he became an officer in the army, his health had undergone no considerable improvement; but it certainly had not become worse. Though now close upon eight-and-twenty, there was nothing manly in his appearance: he looked feeble and effeminate—spoke in a weak voice—and seemed as if he were not long destined for this world. He had continued a rakish, dissipated life, so that the vital essences were drying up within him, and no leisure had been allowed for the impaired constitution of his youth to resuscitate itself in manhood. It was indeed a great mistake on the part of his parents to imagine that a military life would render him steady; but they had fancied that its activity would have contributed to the reinvigoration of his health. Every year, since he entered the army, had he paid a visit for a few weeks to the Manor; and on each occasion Sir Archibald and Lady Redburn had endeavored to persuade themselves that he was looking better. During his stay at home, too, he did improve in appearance somewhat,—the fresh air of the country imparting a little color to his cheeks, and there being not at Oakleigh the same inducements or facilities for dissipation as there were at the towns where he had been quartered, and when in the companionship of his brother-officers.

On the present occasion he returned home sickly, pale, and emaciated as usual; and when Lady Redburn made him put on his uniform that she might see how he looked in it,—observing that his appearance was certainly changed for the better,—Aunt Jane curiously observed "that fine feathers made fine birds." On the day after Gerald's arrival at the Manor, Sir Archibald Redburn took an opportunity of having some private discourse with his wife, carefully excluding Aunt Jane from this conference.

"Now, my dear," said the Baronet, when he and her ladyship were thus closetted together, "what do you candidly think of Gerald?"

"Dear me, Sir Archy—you quite frighten me by the question!—as if you thought there was something wrong. I am sure he looked uncommonly well in his uniform yesterday, when I made him put it on for dinner; and by the time he has been here for a few days you will see him quite ruddy on the cheeks."

"Yes," responded the Baronet: "and when he goes back to his regiment again, all that ruddiness will depart. The fact is, my dear, we have blinded ourselves to the real truth too long. Gerald possesses a sickly constitution—and there is no use, denying it. He is still as dissipated as ever; indeed we know that he is very extravagant."

"I am sure, Sir Archy," rejoined her ladyship, "it is very wrong of you to speak thus of our only son. You have got plenty of

money: and why should he not have enough to spend and enjoy himself?"

"I am afraid he has too much—a great deal too much!" exclaimed the Baronet. "I tell you what, Lady Redburn—Gerald must marry."

"Oh, dear me! he is but a boy. Why, you would make me out quite old. For Heaven's sake don't think of his marrying yet!"

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Sir Archibald: "do endeavor to talk sensibly for once in a way. I tell you that in order to make Gerald perfectly steady, he must marry. Why, he is close upon twenty-eight!"

"Ah! how time flies," interjected Lady Redburn: and then she looked in a mirror to assure herself that her hair was as dark and her teeth were as white as ever: but perhaps the survey was not altogether so satisfactory as she could have wished—for she heaved a profound sigh and resumed the seat from which she had risen.

"Yes," continued Sir Archibald, "we must find a wife for Gerald. He is home on the present occasion for six weeks. Ample time for him to become engaged to some eligible young lady!"

"But I do not think," said the Baronet's wife, "that Gerald is a marrying man."

"We must make him so: or else he will continue dissipated and irregular," rejoined Sir Archibald. "Come, my dear, look around amongst your acquaintances, and consider who will be the best match for Gerald."

"Ah! the task is not an easy one," said her ladyship, with another sigh. "There is Sir John Portman's daughter: but then she has got red hair—and I can't endure red hair—although in other respects she is very good-looking and is an heiress. Then there is Sir Charles Otway's host of daughters—six of them, and all beautiful; a nice choice there—but the worst of it is that Sir Charles is over head and ears in debt, and cannot give his children a farthing. What say you to Captain Montague's youngest daughter? She is only nineteen, and her aunt has left her thirty thousand pounds. But, Oh—I forgot—she has a pug nose: and you know, Sir Archy, it would be impossible for a young lady with a pug nose to enter the Redburn family. By-the bye, there is Squire Evelyn's sister—a sweet pretty girl—very amiable and very ladylike: but she has no ear for music—and for a young lady who can't play and who dances out of time, it is quite shocking! No—we must look farther. What do you say to the Hon. Elizabeth Chalonier? Lord Chalonier is very rich, and has plenty of money in the funds—so that he is sure to give his daughter something handsome. But I forgot—there was a little story about the Hon. Miss Elizabeth and her dancing-master some time ago. Rumor said that she was caught about to elope with him: so that we can't possibly think of her. Of course we cannot for a moment fix our eyes upon Mr. Harding's eldest daughter: she has not a penny, although her good looks certainly recommended her. But I have it! Lady Adela Clive will exactly suit!"—and the countenance of the

Baronet's wife expressed triumph at the thought.

"Well," mused Sir Archibald, "it is not a bad suggestion. The old Earl of Burton left his daughter twenty five thousand pounds, and she is nearly of age. Her mother, Lady Burton, is very intimate with us; and I flatter myself would be pleased at the match. Besides, Lady Adela is an exceedingly handsome and very accomplished girl; and such a daughter-in-law would be an object of pride. I tell you what you must do, my dear: write at once and ask the Countess of Burton and Lady Adela to spend a few weeks with us. They will be sure to come. I will undertake to give Gerald an intimation, in the course of a day or two after their arrival, that I should be glad if he would pay his addresses to Lady Adela: and you can delicately hint to the Countess that it would be by no means a bad match for the young couple—so that she on her part may tutor her daughter.—The Countess is a woman of the world; and Lady Adela is in complete subjection to her. But this, of course, you know as well as I do: and therefore you will be fully aware how to act. One thing however I fancy we should do well to agree upon—which is, that we had better not tell aunt Jane what is going on, or she might take it into her head to throw cold water upon the whole scheme."

"I think so too," responded her ladyship.—"Your sister, Sir Archibald, grows worse and worse—and within the last few years, her temper has become of a sourness that at times quite annoys me."

"Well, well, I suppose that we must put up with it," said the Baronet, who, by one of those eccentricities often observed on the part of even the most worldly-minded natures, was much attached to his sister. "She can't help being what she is. I suppose that it is all connected with her health: for if not, I can see no other means of accounting for it. And now go, my dear—write your letter to Lady Burton—and I will send it to Clive Hall at once."

Meanwhile Captain Redburn had sauntered out through the grounds, smoking a cigar, although it was in the forenoon part of the day. We should here observe that on the previous occasions of his visit to the Manor, since he had joined his regiment, he had treated Davis, the bailiff, with the most marked coldness—never speaking to him—and scarcely even acknowledging the respectful salute which this individual thought it prudent to bestow. On his part, however, Davis had endeavored to avoid meeting the Baronet's son: and thus no conversation had ever taken place between them since that day—nearly seven years back—when the marriage scheme in respect to Lucy was so completely frustrated at Coventry.

While Gerald was strolling through the park, puffing his cigar and looking at his dogs which were scampering and gambolling about, he beheld Davis walking a little in advance, and apparently in deep reflection. Now, Captain Redburn happened to be at the moment in one of those ill-natured moods which experience a pleasure in annoying any individual who is the object of dislike: and having heard from his ser-

vant that very morning what a wretched life the bailiff was leading in his second marriage-venture, the malignant Gerald could not resist the temptation of saying something spiteful.—Quickening his pace, he overtook Mr. Davis; but pretending not to see him, was passing on a little on one side—then turning round, as if to call the dogs towards him, he grew suddenly cold and haughty as his eyes settled upon Lucy's father. This individual touched his hat and was hastening on in the direction of his cottage, when Gerald exclaimed, "Stop a moment, Davis! It is a long time since you and I said a word to each other."

"It is a long time, sir," replied the bailiff, with another touch of the hat. "I thought you bore me ill-will; and so of course I was not forward enough to address you when you have been down at the Manor."

"I suppose the fact is, your conscience pricked you a little—eh, Davis?"—and Gerald sent a tremendous puff of smoke forth from between his lips as he uttered these words.

"I don't know that it should, Captain Redburn," responded Davis, for a moment confused but the next moment he recovered his presence of mind.

"The deuce you don't!" ejaculated Gerald.—"Come, since I have broken the ice and have condescended to speak to you again, I may as well tell you that though I was the dupe of your tricks at the time, I have seen through them long since. Ah! it would have been a very nice day's work for you to have entrapped me into that marriage! Mr. Davis would have become a gentleman, and Lucy a lady: Mr. Davis would have given himself airs, and Lucy would not be the wife of a wretched private soldier—a branded deserter!"

"Captain Redburn, I hope you will not talk about it," said the bailiff, trembling with mingled rage and a sense of humiliation. "I am unhappy enough as it is, I can assure you, sir."

"Well, I understand you are not over and above comfortable with your second wife," observed Gerald. "Somewhat gay and extravagant—eh, Davis?"

"She is, indeed, sir—and there's no use denying it," responded the bailiff, mournfully. "When she was plain Kitty Colyenth, she was all amiability and smiles: but now she is a she-devil in temper. What masks some women can wear, to be sure!"

Gerald liked this scene. He hated and detested the bailiff with all the power of his natural malignity: he hated and detested him, not only because he had endeavoured to inveigle him into that marriage with Lucy, but likewise because he was the father of this same Lucy who had scorned all his advances. He thought that it would afford him still farther pleasure if he were enabled to contemplate with his own eyes the misery which Davis endured with his violent-tempered wife. He had nothing to do except to lounge about and smoke his cigar: the time already hung heavy on his hands; and it occurred to him that he might as well amuse himself as not at Davis's expense. Therefore, suddenly changing his look and his tone, he assumed a friendly demeanor,—saying "Come,



Davis, I have been angry with you quite long enough: I don't wish to be too hard—it's not in my nature. You sought to do the best you could for your girl—and it was all right and natural. So we will bury the past in oblivion. I have not forgot that I used to spend some agreeable evenings with you; and I always liked your conversation—for you are a very intelligent man, Davis."

"I am truly glad, Captain Redburn, to hear you speak in this manner," responded Davis: "it's very noble and generous on your part. Perhaps, sir, you would do me the honor to walk in and take a glass of my cider. I remember you liked it once"—and this was said with an inward sneering feeling, but which was not outwardly expressed.

"With all my heart, Davis," said Gerald, affecting an offhanded frankness; so he and the bailiff advanced towards the cottage together.

But while they are proceeding thither, we will pause for a few minutes to explain what was passing in Davis's mind. Not for an instant had he been deceived by the sudden change in Gerald Redburn's manner. He understood full well the spiteful nature of the Baronet's son, and was too shrewd not to penetrate his vindictive motives in addressing him after so many years of cold and haughty reserve. He likewise fathomed Captain Redburn's intention in speaking in a way which was the same as making an overture to pay another visit to the cottage. Now, the wily Davis was suddenly struck by an idea. His wife, though a perfect vixen in temper, was a very good looking woman; but in consequence of that very temper, as well as on account of her extravagance, Davis was heartily anxious to get rid of her. What if Gerald Redburn might take it into his head to make secret overtures to her? what if he were to think to himself that he might just as well divert his time with a passing amour while at the Manor? If so, there would not only be a ground for divorce, but also for obtaining heavy pecuniary damages against Gerald Redburn; and the sum thus procured, would amply remunerate Davis for the loss of his situation, which must inevitably be expected to follow the commencement of law proceedings. All these calculations swept through the astute and unprincipled bailiff's mind in a moment while Gerald was delivering himself of that speech of assumed friendliness; and hence the invitation which Mr. Davis gave him to walk to the cottage and partake of some cider.

Captain Redburn knew Davis's wife well, and had often spoke to her when she was Miss Kitty Colymeth, although the Colymeth family were not considered good enough to visit at the Manor. But on proceeding to the cottage on the present occasion, Gerald had not the slightest idea of flirting with Mrs. Davis: his sole object was that already described—namely, to obtain once more a footing at Davis's residence, so that he might secretly gloat over the domestic miseries of a man whom he disliked. We may here observe that Mrs. Davis was about twenty-six years of age—of middle stature—slender—but very well formed. She had a remarkably

clear complexion—bright hazel eyes—a profusion of brown hair, which she wore in long clustering ringlets—rich red lips and a beautiful set of teeth. She was dressed quite like a lady—which indeed she considered herself to be, as a surgeon's daughter, notwithstanding she had married a bailiff and had never been admitted within the exclusive circle of the Manor House. Although of such vixenish temper towards her husband, she could be amiable enough when she chose towards others; and the moment she beheld Captain Redburn pass the window in company with the bailiff, she put on her most pleasing and fascinating smile.

The door was opened by the servant-woman, not the good-natured Martha whom we have seen in the earlier chapters of this tale: for she had married some three or four years back, and was comfortably settled in life—as indeed she deserved to be. Gerald entered the little parlor where he had been wont to discuss brandy-and-water with Davis and endeavor to force his attentions upon Lucy. At the first glance he could not help thinking that the surgeon's daughter had improved by marriage in the exact proportion that her husband had suffered thereby; and with a friendliness that was not altogether assumed towards the lady, he extended his hand, saying, "I am very glad to see you, Mrs. Davis."

"Captain Redburn is truly welcome here," she responded with such affability that it seemed scarcely possible she could storm, and rave, and enact the fury at times.

"Pray sit down, sir," said Davis; "and I will fetch some of that nice cider——"

"Cider, Peter!" remarked the lady, with a deprecating look. "Order the servant to bring in some wine; and I think I have a few biscuits here," she added, turning to the side-board and producing the cakes from a drawer.

"Thank you," said Gerald, "I would much prefer cider: it is more refreshing at this time of the day. But if you will permit me to drop in now and then of an evening, I may perhaps be beguiled into something stronger."

"You will always be welcome—most welcome," replied Mrs. Davis, perceiving that her husband had just quitted the room to fetch the cider.

"Oh, I have not forgotten that you and I are old acquaintances!" exclaimed Captain Redburn: "but I must not call you Kitty any longer, now that you have become a sedate married woman."

"Oh, very sedate indeed!" she cried with a merry laugh. "I beg that you will not stand on any ceremony with me—at least, not when such restraint may be thrown off," she added, glancing towards the door.

"I understand—Davis is jealous, eh?" observed Redburn, in a voice of mysterious confidence; and then he thought to himself, "What fun it would be to excite the fellow's jealousy!"

"Oh, jealous!" echoed Kitty: "he is everything that is unbearable. I am sure he leads me such a life, I wish I had never seen him!"

"How you are calumniated!" observed Gerald. "Report says that you are the master here——"

"Well, I suppose," she responded, laughing so as to display her fine teeth, "a woman *will* endeavor to have her own way—and I am no exception to the general rule. But if I have spoken in a sort of confidential manner to you, Captain Redburn, it is because you yourself reminded me that we are old acquaintances. And now tell me how long are you going to stay at the Manor?"

"About six weeks—unless I get so thoroughly tired of a country life before my leave of absence expires, that I find myself obliged to cut it."

"That is being very hard upon us poor Oak-leigh people," observed Mrs. Davis, with an archly reproachful smile.

"Oh! but there are of course exceptions," exclaimed Gerald: "and first and foremost stands yourself."

"Military gentlemen are very clever at compliments—Captain Redburn especially:" and again she laughed slyly.

"Will you allow me to prove the sincerity of my words by paying you an occasional visit of an evening?"

"Have I not already assured you of a welcome? My evenings," she continued, "are sometimes lonely enough—for Mr. Davis has taken it into his head for the last two or three months to go and spend *his* at the Royal Oak."

"Oh, fie!" ejaculated Gerald: "what a shame!—and to leave you pining by yourself!"

"Yes—pining indeed," ejaculated Kitty, with a contemptuous toss of the head. "My mother and sisters come up to supper with me—and sometimes my father, when he is not too busy: and besides them, I have a few friends who drop in. But Mr. Davis grumbles like a bear, saying that I am too gay—that I see too much company—that it all costs money—and such nonsense as that."

"Nonsense indeed," said Redburn. "But I suppose," he continued, laughing, "that you tell him your mind pretty freely?"

"Oh, trust me for that! If he chooses to go and get tipsy at the Oak, I don't see why I am to sit moping at home."

"You would be very silly if you did," rejoined Captain Redburn. "But what the deuce makes him so long getting that cider? and are you not afraid that he will overhear what you say?"

"Not I!" ejaculated Kitty, talking louder than before, as if in bravado. "I would not hesitate to tell him my thoughts, even in your presence."

"Oh! pray don't mind me," replied Gerald, "if it will be any relief to your feelings. Besides, I always like to see women assert their rights; they always look handsomer when they are angry. Pray forgive me for saying so."

"Your compliment would almost provoke me to be angry with *you*," said Mrs. Davis, laughing.

"It would be trouble thrown away," rejoined Redburn; "because you could not look handsomer than you do at this moment."

"Really you have a piece of flattery ready at the tip of your tongue in answer to everything I say:"—and the thoughtless wife laughed gaily again.

At this moment Davis, who had been listen-

ing at the door for the last five minutes, made his appearance with the bottle of cider in his hand, but looking as if he had not overheard a single syllable of what had been taking place.

"Really, Peter," said Mrs. Davis, availing herself of a pretext for showing off her *spirit* before Captain Redburn, "you have taken your time to fetch that cider."

"I could not find the key of the cupboard, my dear," responded the bailiff.

"Then you should not have lost it," retorted his wife. "Here is Captain Redburn dying with thirst——"

"Not quite so bad as that," observed Gerald, laughing.

"Oh, yes—but you are—and Mr. Davis is very rude to have kept you waiting."

The cider was poured out—Gerald drank two or three glasses—and Davis thought that for the sake of appearances he had better remain present on this occasion. The conversation therefore turned upon indifferent topics; and when Gerald rose to depart, he pressed Mrs. Davis's hand tenderly in his own. Likewise shaking hands with Davis, he threw upon him a look which was as much as to imply that all animosity was at an end—although he promised himself in his heart that he would do his best to foster the wife's ill-feeling towards her husband, and call at the cottage now and then, when he knew Davis would be there, to witness the results. On the other hand, the unprincipled bailiff chuckled inwardly: for he had heard enough at the parlor-door to convince him that his wife and Captain Redburn was already on very good terms with each other.

Three or four days afterwards, the Countess of Burton and her daughter Lady Adela Clive, having accepted Lady Redburn's invitation, arrived at the Manor House. The Countess was not an old woman: she was but a few years on the shady side of forty. She had never been handsome, and had even something old maidish in her looks: for she was prim and sedate—speaking but a few words, and those measured and deliberate—very particular in her own bearing, and exacting the utmost respect from others. She was a thoroughly worldly-minded woman, almost to heartlessness. She regarded her daughter with a feeling of pride rather than with the melting tenderness of a true maternal love; and all her thoughts were concentrated in the hope of enabling Lady Adela to form a good match. She looked upon money as of the first importance, and a title as a secondary consideration: so that she would much rather her daughter should marry a wealthy commoner than a poor nobleman.

Lady Adela Clive was twenty years of age, and certainly one of the most beautiful creatures that ever graced this world with her presence. She was tall and exquisitely formed, her shape blending the fullness of a Hebe with the lightness of a Sylph. Her hair was of raven blackness, and was generally worn in the Spanish style,—gathered up in massive *bandeaux*, and with the knot high up on the back of the head, thus setting off its Grecian shape to the utmost advantage. Her eyes were blue,—that deep blue which in certain lights, and at a little dis-



tance, appears to be still darker—but which, when seen in the day-time, is of violet hue. The brows were highly arched, and were set upon the opals of a fine forehead, white as snow and smooth as alabaster. Her complexion was fair, and with but little color: it was that paleness which so often accompanies a high order of intellect:—and of this elevated standard was the mind of Adela Clive. To continue, however, the sketch of her portraiture, we must observe that her nose was perfectly straight—the upper lip short and slightly curved—the under lip somewhat fuller, but not to give a sensuous expression to the beautiful intellectual countenance. The chin was small and delicately rounded: the teeth were like pearls. Her movements were replete with mingled dignity, elegance, and grace. She was altogether a divine creature.

But how was it that she had not already become a bride, with the attractions of beauty, rank, and wealth—and the still greater advantages of brilliant accomplishments? Because her mother—who, though so thoroughly worldly-minded, was nevertheless an old fashioned woman—preferred living at the time-honored country-seat, Clive Hall, about a dozen miles distant from the Manor House, rather than passing any portion of her time amidst the gaieties of London. Her son—Adela's brother, two or three years older than herself—had succeeded to the family title and estates; he was married, and occupied the town mansion, completely surrendering up Clive Hall to the use of his mother and sister. It was therefore on account of leading a comparatively secluded life, that Lady Adela had not as yet won the affections or captivated the heart of any individual on whom Lady Burton chose to bestow her. Offers she had certainly received; but none was deemed eligible by the mother—although one had been most agreeable to the young lady herself. Of this, however, we shall have to speak presently: suffice it to say, that it was generally believed her affections were totally disengaged; and the time had now come when the Countess of Burton seriously thought of marrying her daughter. When, therefore, she received Lady Redburn's note of invitation to pass a few weeks at the Manor House—the letter mentioning, as if quite in a casual way, that Captain Redburn was at home—it had struck Lady Burton, that the son of the richest and most influential baronet in the county, would form an excellent match for her daughter. Under this impression she had accepted the invitation, and arrived with Lady Adela, and a couple of lady's-maids, at the Manor House.

Before continuing our narrative, we must observe, that Lady Adela Clive had been brought up in a habit of implicit obedience towards her mother. Though possessing so fine an intellect, and the high spirit which invariably accompanies an elevated standard of mind, the young lady had never been accustomed to assert her own will, but to continue in that routine which her parent rendered habitual. Her spirit therefore slept, as it were—while her intellect had not been sufficiently enlarged by contact with the world, to make her fully comprehend that she was not altogether an automaton, to move

and think only at her mother's good will and pleasure. She was naturally of an affectionate disposition; she was an only daughter; she had been brought up entirely at home, her education having been conducted by governesses under Lady Burton's continual supervision. She had never been to a boarding-school; she had not visited London more than on three or four occasions, and then only for a few weeks each time; and therefore she was completely ignorant of the world. This ignorance might be better characterized as the most unsophisticated artlessness and ingenuousness, but which never merged into awkward diffidence or girlish embarrassment, because the natural power of her mind rescued her from those extremes. Such was Adela Clive—the beautiful and interesting creature whom it was intended, if practicable, to bestow as a wife upon the sickly, ill-conditioned, effeminate, and dissipated Gerald Redburn.

It had so happened, that on the last two or three occasions when Captain Redburn paid his annual visit to the Manor, he did not fall in with Lady Adela Clive. He had known her, however, almost from childhood; but when last he saw her, she was a girl of seventeen. Now she was a blooming young woman of twenty—and the lapse of that interval had made a wondrous change in her appearance. Gerald was immediately struck by her extraordinary beauty, so that Sir Archibald and Lady Redburn exchanged significant looks, as they observed the impression which Lady Adela made upon their son. The Countess of Burton likewise perceived that impression, and noticed those looks on the part of the Baronet and his spouse: she therefore understood in a moment what was passing in *their* minds—and she was secretly pleased, because it corresponded with her own views. Aunt Jane suspected what was going on; and a withering sneer passed over her pale, emaciated countenance as she observed the striking contrast between the beautiful and brilliant Adela Clive and the dissipated, sickly Gerald Redburn.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### AUNT JANE.

For the first week after the arrival of the Countess and her daughter at the Manor House, Gerald was constant in his attendance upon the latter. When the ladies remained in-doors, he sat with them in the drawing-room; when they walked out, he accompanied them; when they took an airing in the carriage, he went with them on horseback; and when Adela wished to take a longer ramble than her aunt and Lady Redburn chose to venture upon, Gerald was her companion. As he was on his very best behavior, Adela failed at first to perceive any of the bad points in his disposition; and she accepted his courtesies as those which the son of the host and hostess of the mansion where she was staying, was bound to show.

It happened, at the expiration of this first

week, that Lady Burton was taken somewhat indisposed, and kept her chamber. Adela, who, as we have already said, was devotedly attached to her mother, passed the greater portion of the day with her; and thus Gerald was thrown upon his own resources. He had an hour's walk with Adela in the afternoon: but in the evening he had nothing to do; and not liking what he called "the slow work" of sitting with his father, mother, and Aunt Jane in the drawing-room, he bethought himself of paying a visit to the bailiff's cottage. Lighting his cigar, he bent his way between eight and nine o'clock to Mr. Davis's dwelling, and on knocking at the door was immediately admitted by the woman-servant. He learnt that Mr. Davis was not at home, but that Mrs. Davis was. He accordingly entered the parlor, and found the mistress of the cottage seated alone, reading a new novel from a batch of volumes which the carrier had brought her a day or two previously from the circulating library at Middleton. She received Captain Redburn with a marked and studied coldness, barely giving him her hand, and instantaneously withdrawing it again.

"Why, what on earth is the matter?" he exclaimed: "how have I offended you?"

"Oh, not offended!" said Mrs. Davis with a toss of the head which made all her ringlets shake like a weeping willow in a hurricane. "I am too independent to be offended, Captain Redburn!"

"Then what is the matter?" demanded Gerald: "for I see there is something wrong."

"Matter? Oh, nothing! I suppose I have got my proper pride, like other ladies:"—and again she tossed her head and gave a look of mingled significance and vexation.

"Well but what does it all mean? I suppose the fact is, you think I have behaved rude in not calling for a whole week."

"Oh! you are your own master: and of course you can do just as you like. There are ladies staying at the Manor, and they deserve your first consideration. Pray go back to them. They will miss you greatly—particularly the young one with whom you walk about. I dare say she will want you to turn over her music for her at the piano—or hold a skein of silk—or something of that kind: so pray go!"

"Really, Kitty, this is very stupid on your part—"

"Kitty! pray whom do you call Kitty, sir? It was all very well three or four years back when I was a single girl: but now, Captain Redburn, that I am a married woman, I beg to be called Mrs. Davis."

"Oh, very well. But the other evening," continued Gerald, "when I dropped in according to the permission I had received, I addressed you as Kitty and you were not offended."

"Perhaps I was not—because I took you for a friend: but now that more than a week has elapsed since you condescended to honor this humble abode with your presence, I can only think that you *drop in* here, as you call it, when you have nothing better to do: and in plain terms, Captain Redburn, I don't mean to be treated in this way, or let the cottage be made a convenience of."

"Every evening I have been endeavoring to get away," resumed the Captain, "and pay my respects to you: but I have been detained at home. Surely this apology ought to suffice!"

"Ah! if I thought you had really wished to come, it would perhaps be different:"—and the lady showed that she suffered herself to be moved.

"Well, you may feel assured of it—and I promise that my visits shall be oftener paid in future. Come, give me your hand and let us make it up."

For a few moments Mrs. Davis thought it requisite to pout and look sullen: but she soon yielded, as she all along intended to do, and gave her hand to Gerald, who conveyed it to his lips.

"Dear me, Captain Redburn, you *are* gallant this evening!"—and Kitty affected to turn away her countenance as if to hide her blushes.

"I cannot be too gallant towards a pretty woman, such as you?"—and Gerald fixed his eyes with impudent meaning upon her.

"Now what will you take?" she exclaimed, laughing merrily and archly: then hastening to the side-board, she brought forth wine, and cakes, and fruit, which she placed on the table.

"Where is Davis this evening?" asked Redburn, as he took a chair close by the one in which the lady had now seated herself.

"Oh! down at the public-house, as usual," she replied. "But perhaps he is better there than here."

"Did he know that I came the other evening and stayed so late?"

"So late! Why, it was only eleven o'clock when you went away, and he did not come back till past twelve—very tipsy, as usual."

"And what did you say to him?" inquired Gerald: "did you give him your mind?"

"To tell you the truth," returned Mrs. Davis, "I did *not* on that particular occasion:"—then, after a few moments' pause, she added in a simpering tone, "I myself had passed the evening so pleasantly, that so far from being angry at his absence, I was glad of it."

"Oh, but you should always show your spirit," said Gerald, "no matter what you may really feel in your heart: for if Davis once thinks that you are yielding, he will play the tyrant with a vengeance—and you will be completely subdued."

"There is a great deal of truth in what you say, Captain Redburn."

"Call me Gerald: I like it better—and then I shall call you Kitty."

"Well then, Gerald," resumed the lady, again laughing; "I think you have spoken very judiciously."

"But if you were to call me *dear* Gerald," said the Captain, looking amorously upon her, "it would be more agreeable still."

"Oh! what would you think if I did?" murmured Mrs. Davis, now simpering again and pretending to be very much confused.

"I should think if you said so, that you meant it," he replied.

"Ah! but I must not mean it," she continued "it would be very improper indeed——"

"Nonsense! between you and me, who have



known each other so long! But what time do you think Davis will return this evening?"

"Not till midnight: he seldom or ever does. I suppose you intend to favor me with your company for an hour or two: and I will order Sarah"—alluding to the woman servant—"to get a nice little supper ready."

"No, never mind the supper: I dine so late. Besides, it's such an interruption to discourse.—But I will stay here till past eleven. How I should like to hear you give your husband a good scolding! There is nothing I admire so much as a woman of spirit. Ah! I do love a woman who shows her independence! She looks so fine on those occasions."

"Do you 'hink so?"—and the frivolous creature took all that was said as complimentary to herself. "I am resolved to let Davis see this evening, when he comes back, that I have got as good a spirit of my own as ever. He is sure to return tipsy."

"Then he has taken to drinking lately?" observed Redburn.

"Oh, yes—terribly! He was always fond of his spirits-and-water of an evening: but he used to take his glass at home, and never went into extremes. But of late he has frequented the public-house, and drinks deeper every day."

"What a disgusting sight is a drunken husband," remarked Gerald. "I wonder any woman of spirit puts up with it!"

"Oh, you should hear how I sometimes go on against him," exclaimed Kitty. "You would then see that I really do possess a spirit."

"I should like to hear you. I told you just now that there is nothing I love so much as to see a woman of spirit—particularly when her anger is not directed against myself."

"I tell you what," said Mrs. Davis, as a thought struck her,—“if you would really like to hear me tell Peter my mind, you could just wait till he comes in.”

"Ah! but I do not want him to find me here—at least not at such a late hour. But if I did stay, how would you manage it?"

"You could conceal yourself behind the window-curtains," replied Mrs. Davis. "He would not stay long in the room here, when once I began to scold at him; and as soon as he went up stairs, I could let you secretly and quietly out of the house."

"It is a great temptation," observed Gerald; "and I am almost inclined to stay."

He did so—and sat conversing with the thoughtless woman until past eleven o'clock.—Suddenly there was a knock at the front door; and Kitty exclaimed, "There he is—a good half-hour earlier than usual!"

"Perhaps he is sober," hastily suggested Gerald.

"Not a chance of it. By the very way he knocked, I know that he is tipsy."

"But the servant will tell him I am here," was Redburn's next remark.

"She will say nothing of the kind—she never speaks unless spoken to. Now then, if you really wish to hear a scene, hide yourself at once."

Captain Redburn immediately passed behind the curtains, which he drew in such a manner as

to conceal himself; and scarcely was he ensconced in the window-recess, when the bailiff entered the parlor.

"A pretty state you are in, Peter," exclaimed the wife. "How dare you present yourself in this condition before me? I would have you know that I am not to be outraged or insulted in such a manner. Oh, what a spectacle you are! what a loathsome object!"

"Now then, enough of this," growled Davis; "and get up to bed with you."

"I shall not at your command," retorted Kitty. "Be off yourself. I am sure you must be anxious to lie down—for you can scarcely stand."

"Go up, I tell you directly!" exclaimed the bailiff, speaking in a less tipsy manner than before, and with a resolute sternness. "Go up, I say—I am determined to be obeyed."

"Then I won't," ejaculated his wife. "You shall not tyrannize over me: I will show you that I am the mistress here."

"And I will show that I am the master. Come now, go up to bed directly:"—and Davis spoke in a still firmer voice and in a still more resolute tone of command.

Kitty was not prepared for this. She had really thought that her husband, preferring to continue the altercation up stairs, would hasten up to bed, as had previously been his wont. She grew alarmed lest he should discover Redburn's presence in the room; and she now perceived all the imprudence of the step she had taken in allowing him to conceal himself there. She therefore thought that the best plan would be to get her husband up stairs as soon as possible; and adopting a somewhat more conciliatory tone and manner, she said, "I presume you are coming up at once."

"Yes, directly:"—then taking up one of the candles, he said, "Sarah will put out the other light, when she has seen that all is safe. Go up—and I will follow you."

Mrs. Davis was only too glad to find that there was this easy escape from the dilemma into which she had got herself; but still thinking it necessary to show her spirit, she exclaimed, "Come along, then: the sooner you get up to bed the better—and I will give you my mind, I promise you! I will teach you what it is to come home to me every night in such a disgraceful state, you brute, you!"

Davis said not a word, but followed his wife from the parlor. Pausing a moment in the passage, he cried out, "Now, Sarah, we are going up to bed. See that all's right."

The servant at once made her appearance and a rapid look of significance was exchanged between Davis and herself—a look which Kitty failed to observe, as she had already begun to ascend the stairs. Davis followed his wife; and they entered the bed-chamber together. Sarah proceeded to the parlor; and Gerald Redburn, emerging from behind the curtains, placed his finger to his lip. The woman started—or affected to start, as if in dismay at the sudden appearance of the Baronet's son; and he, at once slipping a couple of guineas into her hand, said in a hurried whisper, "Let me out as

quick as you can—and for heaven's sake don't say a word to your master!"

"Not I, sir. I see and hear, but say nothing. Indeed, I don't want to see or hear more than I can help. Young people will be young people."

"To be sure, to be sure," observed Gerald, well pleased that the woman should be thus accessible to bribery.

The cottage door was opened cautiously, and he stole out. As he hurried back to the Manor House, he said to himself, "It was a damned deal too foolish of me to go hiding behind those curtains; but I did want to hear Kitty blow the fellow Davis up. I think she is devilishly in love with me; but I don't know—perhaps I had better not—and yet it would be taking a fine revenge on that scoundrel Davis, for trying to hook me into marrying his daughter seven years ago. Ah, the villain! what lies he did tell me—what tricks he did play—and what a narrow escape I had too! How I could ever have been such a fool, I can't make out."

It was past twelve o'clock when Gerald entered the Manor House; and ascending to the drawing-room, he found his father and mother, together with Aunt Jane, seated there, evidently waiting his return. The Baronet was dozing over the paper—Lady Redburn was reclining on a sofa, revolving in her mind the number of friends and acquaintances who ought to be asked to the wedding when Gerald should lead Lady Adela Clive to the altar—an event which she looked upon as beyond all doubt; while Aunt Jane, sitting up in her chair as prim and sour-looking as ever, was occupied in knitting.

"Why, Gerald, my dear boy, how late you are!" said his mother, as he entered the room. "Where have you been?"

"Oh, I just dropped in at the Ardens," he responded, glibly uttering the first excuse that came into his head.

"I suppose," said Aunt Jane, "that Mr. Arden was very glad to see you?"

"Oh, very!" ejaculated Gerald.

"Then Mr. Arden is ubiquitous," observed Aunt Jane, with a sneer: "for he has been with us the whole evening, and has only just this minute taken his departure."

"Well then," said Gerald, bursting out into a supercilious laugh, "I suppose I haven't been there at all. And I tell you what it is, Aunt Jane—you needn't show such anxiety to catch me out in a fib. I am not a boy now."

"No—you are a manikin," she observed quietly.

"And you are a nasty, ill-tempered, sour-looking old maid," ejaculated Gerald; and he flung himself out of the room in a violent rage.

"That was not right of Gerald—very wrong indeed!" exclaimed the Baronet, red with indignation.

"But then Aunt Jane should not question him: he is not a child now," observed her ladyship.

"It was you, my dear, who first questioned him," replied Aunt Jane. "As for his impertinence, I care nothing about it. It's the way he has been brought up;"—and with these words she quitted the apartment.

Another week passed, during which Captain Redburn continued his assiduities towards Lady Adela Clive: but she now began to feel somewhat importuned thereby, and gradually afforded him fewer opportunities of being alone with her. The suspicion had arisen in her mind, though dimly and vaguely, that he was paying his court to her; and she grew frightened at the thought. She grew frightened for more reasons than one: firstly, because her affections were irrevocably bestowed upon another—secondly, because she had begun to dislike Gerald Redburn—and thirdly, because her mother had hinted to her that the time was approaching when she must think of settling in life. In order to avoid Captain Redburn, she no longer walked out except when her mother or Lady Redburn walked out likewise; and if she found herself alone with Gerald in the drawing room, she speedily withdrew to her own chamber.

During this second week of the visit of Lady Burton and Lady Adela at the Manor House, Gerald managed to call twice at the bailiff's cottage, and to pass an hour or two on each occasion with Kitty. But when he on the second visit endeavored to transfer a kiss from her hand to her lips, she repulsed him with more resolution than he had anticipated for the truth is, that Mrs. Davis, though an exceedingly thoughtless woman—fond of flattery and flirting, and well pleased at receiving the visits of a captain in the army, who was also a wealthy baronet's son—was not so depraved as to fling herself into his arms at the first overture. Nevertheless, it was in a laughing manner that she had repulsed him, although so resolutely, for she did not think that he entertained any deliberate intention towards her. On his part Redburn set her behavior down as a shyness which it would take but little trouble to conquer; and he determined that the next time he visited at the cottage he would not submit so easily to a rebuff, if it should be attempted.

It was at the expiration of the second week of which we have spoken, that Gerald on entering the drawing-room one forenoon, found Aunt Jane seated there alone. He was about to retire, when she said, "Don't go away for a minute: I want to speak to you."

"And what the deuce do you want to say to me?" he asked, somewhat savagely.

"I suppose you hate me," observed Miss Redburn. "Well, your hatred won't kill me: for I do not think that even if you were engaged in battle, you would prove very formidable to an enemy."

"Was it to talk in this ill-tempered way that you told me to stop?"—and Gerald was again moving towards the door.

"No—I meant to speak to you about Adela Clive?"—and Aunt Jane fixed her eyes of glassy azure with a peculiar look upon her nephew.

"Ah!" he ejaculated, advancing straight up to where she was seated. "And pray what do you want to tell me about Adela?"

"Oh, little enough," she responded in a sneering tone: "only it struck me that you were becoming rather sweet in that quarter—and



perhaps you will find that the grapes are sour."

"What the deuce do you mean? I wish you would speak intelligibly."

"I suppose you have heard that Adela is in love with another?"—and Aunt Jane seemed to experience a sort of malignant pleasure as she thus spoke.

"In love with another! I never heard of it before—and what's more, I don't believe it. Now then, please to be explicit."

"If you don't believe me," said Aunt Jane, in a cold but half-sneering voice, "there is no use in my uttering another word."

"You may just as well tell me what you have got in your head," remarked Gerald: "because then I can judge for myself."

"Yes—you are such a fine discriminator: you know the difference between a man and a monkey when you look in the glass. However," continued the spiteful woman, perceiving that her nephew bit his lip with rage, "I may as well tell you what I have heard. About eighteen months ago, Lord and Lady Stansfield, together with their son and nephew, paid a visit to Clive Hall. I don't think you know the Stansfields? No great loss, at least for a sensible person: although *you* would have taken infinite delight in their society. Lord Stansfield is as arrogant and overbearing as your father, and perhaps a trifle more wooden-headed: Lady Stansfield is quite as frivolous as your mother, but older and uglier. As for the Honorable Ferdinand Stansfield, he is a veritable puppy—a shallow-minded coxcomb—sickly-looking and dissipated, but very self-sufficient withal. In short, he reminds me uncommonly of yourself. But the nephew, Reginald Herbert, is quite a different being. He must now be about three-and-twenty—tall, handsomely formed, and exceedingly good-looking. He is intelligent too. He has got more in his little finger in the shape of knowledge, than some persons that I know have in their whole composition. He is likewise a good young man—steady, well principled, and of a magnanimous spirit. Of course you can have no conception of such a character—it is not likely you could: for in this world people are too apt to judge others by themselves. The great misfortune is that Reginald Herbert has not a penny piece beyond the salary derived from a Government situation which he holds. That is only five hundred a-year—a trifle that would not pay for your cigars, although it enables him to live honorably like a gentleman—which is more than fifty thousand a-year could do to many persons of my acquaintance. Now, it happened that Reginald Herbert fell deeply in love, as the phrase goes, with Adela Clive; and what was equally natural, Adela Clive fell as deeply in love with him. The real object of the Stansfields' visit to Clive Hall, was for the son and heir to pay his court to Adela: but Lady Burton discovered something so derogatory to his character as a gentleman and an embryo nobleman, that she declined the connexion on behalf of her daughter. Perhaps she will have to do the same thing over again very shortly in another case. However, while the Stansfields had been vainly endeavoring to arrange that mar-

riage for their son—their nephew Reginald and Adela had become deeply attached. It is not however supposed that any explanation took place between them: for Herbert knew in his heart that his five hundred a-year would not recommend him to the Countess of Burton as a husband for her daughter. He knew the world, you see. The Countess discovered this attachment, just about the same time she discovered Mr. Stansfield's debauched conduct. So it was in one sense fortunate that the Stansfields left Clive Hall somewhat abruptly, inasmuch as Reginald Herbert was compelled to accompany them."

"And pray how did you learn all this?" inquired Gerald, when his aunt had ceased speaking.

"Oh! it was whispered about at the time," she responded; "and I have not the slightest doubt it was strictly true. Ask your parents, if you like: they know more of such things than I do—and they can tell you all about it, if they think fit to speak the truth."

"Well, it may be that Adela formed a girlish attachment which has passed away," remarked Gerald.

"How do you know that it has passed?" inquired the aunt. "It is so easy to assume things as being true because we wish them so."

"But how do you know that it has *not* passed away?" demanded Gerald.

"I judge from appearances," rejoined Miss Redburn. "I know that Adela Clive's mind cherishes some image; and I would stake my existence that it is not yours."

"How do you know that? You seem to be very positive."

"Because, knowing Adela Clive thoroughly as I do—knowing *you* also thoroughly—as I do—I am confident that she is no more capable of loving you than of becoming enamored of one of the scarecrows stuck up in the corn-fields."

"You are exceeding complimentary, aunt, I must say," observed Gerald, bitterly. "Perhaps you think yourself a great beauty."

"If I had one tithe of your conceit, I certainly should: but under circumstances I do not."

"Well, we shall see," muttered Gerald to himself: and he abruptly quitted the drawing-room. On the landing he encountered his mother, who was proceeding to that apartment, and the thought struck him that he would inquire more particularly into what Aunt Jane had just been telling him. So he beckoned Lady Redburn into another room; and when they were alone there together, he said, "Suppose, mother, that I was to make an offer of my hand to Lady Adela, do you think it would be accepted?"

"My dear boy," responded her ladyship, quite delighted to see that he was in this matrimonial mood, "I am certain it would be accepted, because the Countess has taken a liking to you and she would only have to breathe a word to her daughter—"

"Ah! but that is not exactly what I meant," interrupted Gerald. "I mean, do you think that Adela of her own free will would accept me? It has struck me that she has grown

rather shy within the last few days: she does not walk with me in the grounds any longer."

"It is mere girlish coyness," observed Lady Redburn.

"But aunt Jane has been telling me, in her own beautiful style, a long story about a certain Mr. Reginald Herbert——"

"All nonsense, Gerald. Now the truth is," continued her ladyship, "that I and the Countess have within the last hour been having some serious conversation together. Our views are identical; and since you are pleased with Lady Adela, her mother will take care that she shall be pleased with you."

"This is at least satisfactory," exclaimed Captain Redburn. "But somehow or another, this Reginald Herbert is a name that sticks in my throat. I should not like to marry a girl who loved another, because there is no saying what might happen hereafter."

"Lady Adela, Gerald, is virtue itself," responded his mother, with more seriousness than she was wont to display. "But of course you cannot yet propose to Lady Adela. It will be time enough when your leave of absence expires a month hence: and then, in the course of a few months more, you can obtain another leave of absence, or else quit the army altogether—which perhaps would be better—and settle down in life."

"About quitting the army, I don't know," rejoined Gerald. "I rather like the red coat.—But about this Reginald Herbert——"

"The report was all false, I can assure you," replied his mother. "Aunt Jane was very wrong to put such nonsense in your head. Indeed I cannot fancy how she came to perceive you had any thoughts in that quarter."

"It's my opinion the old girl is shrewder and keener by a great deal than you fancy. However, I am glad I have spoken to you on the subject: for I have now no doubt it was all Aunt Jane's malignity and spite. She is a crabbed old maid herself, and does not like to see other women stand a chance of getting husbands. Besides, she appears to take a pleasure in throwing a damp on one's hopes or spirits; and she is getting more bitter every day. Where is Adela now?"

"She has gone down to accompany her mother for a few turns in the garden. The Countess is going to hint as delicately as she can that whatsoever attentions you may choose to pay, are to be received graciously. I do not think you will find any more shyness in that quarter. In a few minutes you would do well to join the ladies: the Countess will be sure to leave you with Lady Adela, whom you will no doubt find obediently submissive to the suggestions thrown out by her mother."

At this moment Sir Archibald Redburn entered the room with the local journal in his hand.

"What do you think?" he exclaimed; "that fellow Bates has made his escape from the officers who were conveying him to Portsmouth.—Here's a full account of it in the paper. Ah! that is one of the most cunning scoundrels I ever knew in all my life."

Gerald not feeling very particularly inter-

ested in Mr. Bates's affairs, quitted the room and descended to the garden. There he observed the Countess of Burton and Lady Adela Clive walking together,—the latter with her eyes bent down upon the gravel-path, as if in a very serious mood. He at first hesitated to accost them; for he thought that perhaps the Countess might not have finished her lecture to her daughter: but her ladyship beckoned him to approach—and as he drew near, she said, "You seemed uncertain, Captain Redburn, whether you should join us. I can assure you that if we are not taking you from any more agreeable occupation, your company would be most welcome. The weather is truly beautiful and inviting for a walk."

Gerald offered the ladies each an arm: the Countess took one—Adela the other—and they issued forth into the grounds. The young lady was evidently laboring under a deep depression of spirits, which she however strove to conquer, or at least to conceal. But she only spoke in monosyllables, or in brief sentences; and as for a smile, none gleamed upon her lips. After a few turns in the garden were taken, the Countess complained of fatigue,—saying, "I must now go in-doors; but it is no reason why I should deprive you two of your walk."

Thus speaking, she quitted Gerald's arm and entered the mansion, leaving her daughter with him whom she hoped to behold the young lady's bridegroom.

"Shall we extend our walk a little, Lady Adela?" inquired Gerald. "I do not think you have yet been in the direction of Oakleigh, except in the carriage; and there is some beautiful scenery in the neighborhood of the village."

"I shall be happy to accompany you," was the young lady's reply, but delivered in a somewhat cold tone, and certainly in a mournful one; for she was still the prey of desponding thoughts.

Passing round to the front of the mansion, Captain Redburn conducted his beautiful companion down the gentle slope leading towards the grove, in the vicinage of Oakleigh; and while thus strolling onward, he pointed out various scenes and spots which he considered interesting.

"And whose is that picturesque little cottage?" inquired Lady Adela, by way of saying something: for she had been many minutes silent, and she did not wish to appear absolutely rude towards her companion.

"Oh! that is the bailiff's residence—a man named Davis. He used to be a very excellent servant of my father's; but of late he has got dissipated—frequents the public-house—and is in the habit of getting tipsy. I don't think the governor knows all his goings-on: in fact, I am sure he doesn't—but I think it is my duty to give him a hint. I mean my father?"—for Lady Adela looked evidently at a loss for a moment to comprehend whom Captain Redburn meant by *the governor*. "This fellow Davis, the bailiff of whom we are speaking," he continued, "married a second wife between two and three years ago—a young woman much above himself, though not of course belonging to *our* circle. She is the daughter of the village doctor—a good look-



ing person enough, but shockingly extravagant, gay, and flirty. The fact is," proceeded Gerald, conceiving that this was an excellent opportunity to pass himself off before Lady Adela as a right-thinking and well-principled man, as well as a great discriminator in respect to the good or evil qualities of the female sex,—“I very much dislike those gaily-dressing, flaunting, flirtish women, who give themselves airs and stare impudently at all young men. That is just what Mrs. Davis is: she is uncommonly forward—and in short, I think it is a most unfortunate match for the bailiff.”

“Perhaps, therefore,” suggested Adela, with a truly generous intention, “you had better not be too severe upon him in reporting his conduct to Sir Archibald Redburn; for the poor man may have domestic cares which drive him away from his home.”

“I am sure, if your ladyship wishes me to be merciful,” said Gerald, “I shall cheerfully follow your bidding. In all things it will be a pleasure to me to pay every attention to the slightest word that drops from *your* lips.”

Adela bent down her eyes and said nothing; but her heart swelled within her, for she perceived that Captain Redburn was indeed serious in paying his addresses towards her—those addresses which, her mother had hinted to her ere now in the garden, she was not to repudiate. At this moment, Gerald Redburn caught sight of a gaily-dressed female approaching up the pathway from the village. She was appareled in all the colors of the rainbow, and therefore in the gaudiest style as well as in the worst possible taste. He had no trouble in recognizing Mrs. Davis; and his first impulse was to turn suddenly off with Adela in another direction: but he felt that this would be an insult which Kitty was quite capable of resenting upon the spot—and he naturally dreaded such a scene. Besides, it would appear extraordinary to Lady Adela herself, to drag her out of the beaten pathway over the grass; and while he was hesitating what course to adopt, it became too late to retreat or diverge at all.

“How do you do, Captain Redburn?” said Mrs. Davis, walking straight up to him and extending her hand.

Gerald was compelled to stop,—compelled also to take that hand; but instantaneously relinquishing it, he bowed somewhat distantly, and was leading Lady Adela away, when Mrs. Davis exclaimed, “Pray introduce me to her ladyship. I have heard so much of her, and quite long to know her. Do, my dear Captain Redburn, introduce me, there’s a good soul!”—and she spoke with an easy off-hand familiarity, as well as with the utmost effrontery.

“Lady Adela Clive and the Countess of Burton,” replied Gerald, shaking his head in a deprecating manner at Kitty, “are paying a quiet and friendly visit at the Manor, and do not form any new acquaintances. Pray do not think me rude—Good morning!”—and raising his hat to make a polite bow in order to disarm Kitty of any ill-humor, he led Adela onward.

The young lady was naturally surprised at the flaunting, forward, gaudily appareled woman whom they had just passed, should have

addressed Captain Redburn with so much familiarity. But she said nothing. Gerald cast an anxious look over his shoulder to assure himself that Kitty had continued her way to the cottage; and finding that she had, he breathed somewhat more freely. He felt that some explanation was due to Lady Adela; yet how could he possibly tell her that this was the identical Mrs. Davis of whom he had spoken so disparagingly but a few minutes before? He inwardly cursed his folly in having committed such an oversight as to bring Adela for a walk in that direction; but the evil was done—and something must be said to remedy it.

“How very rude and impertinent some of these country people are apt to be,” he began. “They are so forward and encroaching. That’s the wife of a very substantial farmer—a tenant of my father’s; and so of course I was bound to be decently civil to her. I dare say she has gone to call upon those Daveses that we were talking about.”

“I really thought, from the description you had previously given, Captain Redburn, that it was Mrs. Davis herself,” observed Adela.

“Oh, dear me, no! *that* would be rather too much of a good thing! What, the bailiff’s wife to address me in such a familiar style!”

“It certainly was rather familiar,” observed Lady Adela coldly.

“Yes: but as I tell you, they are capital tenants, and perhaps on that account have been a little humored; so that they take advantage of it. But here is Mr. Arden.”

The village clergyman drew nigh at the moment, and took off his hat to Lady Adela, with whom he was acquainted. He then shook hands with Redburn; and the usual complimentary observations were exchanged.

“Did you see with what scandalous gayety that female was dressed out?” inquired the Rev. Mr. Arden, looking in the direction of the bailiff’s cottage, and therefore not observing the hasty shake of the head which Gerald gave at the instant. “It is a positive shame to see the wife of a working man,—for her husband is only a working man of a superior grade,—thus wasting the domestic substance in silks, and fine shawls, and flowing veils, and flaunting ribbons.”

“Are you going up to the Manor, Mr. Arden?” interrupted Gerald, who had grown very uneasy at the clergyman’s remarks: “for we intend to proceed a little farther.”

“No I merely came forth for a stroll,” was the reverend gentleman’s response; “and with your permission I will join you.”

While thus speaking, he placed himself by Lady Adela’s side, so that the deprecating looks which Redburn was still throwing upon him, remained unperceived.

“As I was observing,” he continued, “it is really shameful to see that—”

“There is a beautiful spot, Lady Adela!” ejaculated Gerald, pointing towards the grove intersected by the rivulet—that grove made memorable in this narrative as the trying-place of Frederick and Lucy before their marriage.

“I declare,” continued the clergyman, still

harping upon the same string, "that I shall preach a sermon against such outrageous conduct, if it be continued. It is bringing scandal on the good name of our sweet little village; and I, as the pastor, have a duty to perform—"

"How picturesque, Lady Adela," said Gerald, who was walking onward in tortures, "does the church look when seen from this spot?"—but he was speaking somewhat at random: for it was only the vane which could just be descried above the embowering yew-trees.

"Does not your ladyship consider I shall be doing my duty," proceeded Mr. Arden, most anxious to pass himself off as the zealous minister of his flock, "if I denounce from the pulpit—"

"But Captain Redburn assures me," observed Adela, "that they are very worthy persons."

"Indeed!" ejaculated the clergyman. "Davis, who has turned out a drunkard—"

"That was not Mrs. Davis," said Adela, now beginning to entertain some suspicion that the truth had not been told her.

"Not Mrs. Davis!" echoed the Rev. Mr. Arden, growing warm upon the subject: "there is no possibility of mistaking her. She passed me by—and I saw her ascend the slope; but I lost sight of her on account of a turning in the grove for some minutes, until I observed your ladyship and Captain Redburn."

"No, indeed! Was that Davis's wife?" ejaculated the latter, with affected amazement. "I really thought it was Mrs. Tomkins."

"Mrs. Tomkins!" said the parson: "why, you know she has been dead for the last twelve months."

"Oh! well, there's some mistake," observed Gerald, covered with confusion. "I think your ladyship will perhaps be tired if we proceed any farther."

"I think so too," she said coldly; and quitting her companion's arm, she added, "With your permission I will walk alone."

Mr. Arden now took his leave of Lady Adela and Gerald; and the two, retracing their way towards the Manor, walked on in silence. The circumstance relative to the bailiff's wife was altogether trivial enough; but still it had displayed a certain duplicity and falsehood on Captain Redburn's part, which had suddenly lowered him very considerably in Lady Adela's estimation. She could not possibly conceive what motive he had for thus deluding her as to that female's identity—unless it were that he was in reality more friendly with her than he had chosen to acknowledge—and the pure mind of the young lady was shocked at the suspicion. On the other hand, Gerald felt that he had got himself into a little dilemma; and he was very much afraid that Adela would mention the circumstance to her mother—in which case, it would naturally be supposed that he was far more intimate with Mrs. Davis than he ought to be, and more improperly so than he really was. He knew not what to say: he could not ask Adela to keep silent upon the subject; and he therefore thought the best plan was to leave the matter to take its course. After walking some minutes in silence, he renewed the conver-

sation, by directing his fair companion's attention to some interesting piece of scenery; but her replies were cold and distant. Again there was an interval of silence, which he broke by asking her if she would now take his arm again; but she declined, observing that she preferred walking without any support. In this manner they regained the house; and Adela, at once ascending to her own chamber, sent a message by her maid to her mother in the drawing-room, to the effect that she wished to speak to her. The Countess hastened to her daughter's apartment; and then Adela told her all that had occurred.

"You need not think anything of it, my dear girl," said the Countess of Burton. "On the contrary, if you understood these things—which, thank heaven, you do not—you would perceive that there was a great deal of delicacy in Captain Redburn's conduct, which the officious observations of Mr. Arden neutralized. Banish it from your mind, Adela; and Captain Redburn will become quite steady, when once he settles down into married life."

Thus speaking, and without giving her daughter time for any remonstrance, the Countess quitted the chamber. She had naturally been struck by the idea that Gerald had perhaps flirted, or even been still more intimate with the bailiff's wife, and that his sense of honor and decency had prompted him to give so positive a refusal to the request which the woman had made for an introduction to Lady Adela. She therefore was rather inclined to entertain a higher opinion of Gerald, than otherwise, on account of this incident; for she knew that "young men would be young men," as the palative phrase goes; and she contrasted the seeming delicacy of his conduct most favorably with a certain disgraceful display of loose principles which had come to her knowledge on the part of the Hon. Ferdinand Stanfield, at the time this latter individual was a candidate for Adela's hand, and which circumstance had led the Countess to put an abrupt end to the courtship. But the present case was altogether a different one in her eyes; and being a thorough woman of the world, the Countess of Burton was by no means disposed to interrupt the progress of things towards the accomplishment of a good match for her daughter, just because accident had made known a little affair of gallantry on the Captain's part. Thus Gerald's fears on this head proved to be unfounded. But Adela herself was now, if possible, more than ever repugnant to the idea of having to receive the addresses of Captain Redburn; and in the solitude of her chamber she sighed and wept, as she thought of the high-minded, the upright, and the handsome Reginald Herbert.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE BILLET-DOUX.

In the evening, Gerald Redburn sallied forth from the mansion, with his cigar in his mouth, and bent his steps towards the bailiff's cottage.



He had two objects in making this call so soon after the occurrence of the forenoon. In the first place, he was anxious to disarm Kitty of any animosity she might experience on account of the somewhat cold way he had treated her—for he was just sufficiently smitten with her to make her the object of a passing amour; and in the natural malignity of his soul, he sought to accomplish this as the best revenge he could take upon the bailiff. In the second place, he wished to impress upon Kitty's mind the necessity of observing something like a decent forbearance the next time she might happen to meet him in company with Lady Adela.

On arriving at the cottage, Captain Redburn learnt from Sarah, the woman-servant, that Mr. Davis was out, as usual, but that Mrs. Davis was alone in the parlor. Kitty had expected this visit, and was prepared with sullen looks and pouting lips to give the Captain a cold reception. Her pride had been bitterly annoyed—her vanity wounded in its most sensitive point; while she had not sufficient good sense and discretion to make her aware that her own conduct had been most indelicately forward, and that Gerald had treated her with even more consideration than she deserved, or than he in his own ill-conditioned nature might have been expected to display.

"Ah! this is just as I thought," said Captain Redburn. "What's the use of being bad-tempered?"

"It is like your impudence, asking me such a question," returned Mrs. Davis, shaking her head and her curls:—and we may parenthetically observe that she had arranged her hair most artistically, and put on her best apparel, together with all the ornaments she possessed, in anticipation of this visit. "So you would have cut me to-day if you could, when you were walking with that proud-looking girl?"

"Come, Kitty, don't give yourself these airs," said Redburn, coaxingly. "Upon my word you look quite charming this evening. Are you expecting company?"

"I expected no one—I thought I should have been all by myself—I didn't want any one to drop in;—and she pouted like a spoiled child.

"Not even me? Well, at all events I am happy in having surprised you in one of your prettiest moments. You really do look quite fascinating. What beautiful hair!"—and he ventured to touch her perfumed ringlets.

"Be quiet, Captain Redburn! How dare you—particularly after your conduct to-day——"

"This dress becomes your complexion admirably."

"Well, it is fortunate that you are pleased with something."

"Pleased? I am always pleased with you—or else why should I come to see you? But do let me look at that ring," he said, as a pretext for taking her hand, which she abandoned to him with only a slight show of resistance. "It is really very pretty—the hand I mean, and not the ring;"—and as he spoke, he pressed that hand to his lips.

"Fie, Captain Redburn!" exclaimed Kitty, affecting to turn away her head in confusion.

"Are you not ashamed of yourself, after your conduct of to-day?"

"Pray do not return to the subject. This costume sets off your figure to the greatest advantage: you are really very well made—a sweet pretty shape: a milliner must take pride in dressing you."

"How you do talk!" cried the thoughtless woman, suffering herself to be gradually wheedled into a good humor.

"I am only telling you the truth. Now, Kitty, pray don't be angry with me any longer. I could not help acting as I did; and you are a woman of such fine intelligence and admirable good sense, you must see it in that light."

"All flattery!" she exclaimed, with an arch look: for she was now completely softened.

"You are so bewitchingly beautiful this evening that I must receive a practical assurance of your forgiveness;"—and he pressed his lips to hers, without experiencing a repulse on the present occasion.

But that very same instant the door opened; and Sarah made her appearance, bearing the snuffer-tray in her hand. Mrs. Davis flew to a seat—and Redburn ran his fingers through his hair, humming a tune. The servant said nothing: she looked discretion itself, and it was impossible to tell by her aspect whether she had seen that caress or not. She deposited the snuffer-tray upon the table, and quitted the room.

"How provoking!" ejaculated Mrs. Davis, who was in reality much annoyed.

"Oh! she will not say a word," observed Redburn. "Besides, she must have thought there was something singular the other night, when I was concealed behind the curtains——"

"Nevertheless, I wish she had not seen this," answered Kitty; and she inwardly resolved that it should not take place again.

"Where is Davis this evening?" asked Redburn. "At the public-house, as usual, I suppose."

"Most likely. I wish he would not leave me like this—I wish he was a better husband—I wish I had a husband that I could love and respect, and who would stay at home. I wish, in short—I don't know what I wish."

"How queer you are talking," exclaimed Redburn, gazing upon her in the most unfeigned surprise.

"I fear," she immediately answered, "that I am acting very thoughtlessly and very foolishly. I am already compromised before the servant," she continued in a tone of vexation. "What must she think? Oh, I have been very imprudent! Now, Captain Redburn, I entreat you to do me a service."

"What is it?" he asked, still astonished at the seriousness which she had suddenly put on, and which was evidently real and unaffected.

"I wish you would leave me," she replied, rising from her chair, but remaining at a little distance; "and I beseech that if you come here again, it may be in the broad day-light when people are about."

"This is most ridiculous, Kitty!" ejaculated the Baronet's son. "What has come over you all of a sudden?"

"A feeling like a remorse for the thoughtlessness of my conduct," she at once rejoined, with a firmness of look and tone of which he had not fancied her capable. "I see that all this has gone too far;—not too far, heaven be thanked, to retract—but still too far for my reputation, which is now in the hands of a servant. Do—I beseech you—leave me!"

"What! and you have any compunction on account of that brutal drunken husband of yours?" cried Gerald contemptuously.

"Ah! but he still is my husband," responded Kitty; "and, and,—do, I beseech you, leave me. I have stood upon a precipice—I see it all now. Foolish, and giddy, and thoughtless though I may be, I am not wicked. No, no!"—and she seemed to shudder as she spoke.

"But are you serious? or is this a part you are playing?"—and still Redburn gazed upon her with mingled surprise and incredulity.

"I am serious—perfectly so," she answered. "But I can forgive you for asking me if I am playing a part: the levity of my conduct has been sufficient to warrant you in thinking anything. Do leave me, Captain Redburn."

"You wish us to part thus?" he said, affecting a reproachful look and air, so that she really thought he had conceived an affection for her of a deeper and more genuine character than the mere sensual passion which he in reality entertained.

"We must part thus," she responded, in a voice mournful but firm; for she on her side had conceived a real attachment towards him. "Do not be afraid I shall be guilty of such impropriety as to accost you again when you are walking with Lady Adela Clive. You are paying your addresses to her: *that* I well know. She is a very beautiful girl, and you will love her—yes, you will love her, if you do not already. In every way, therefore, it would be most wicked—most unpardonable, of me to encourage your visits here."

"If we must part, then," said Gerald, "will you grant me one favor? Permit me to send you some little present to-morrow as a token of my esteem and friendship. Let Sarah go down to the Oak when the van comes in from Middleton, and inquire for a parcel directed to you. Now, do not refuse me: it is the only condition upon which I will go away at once."

"Well, well, have it your own way," murmured Kitty, who felt that her fortitude was leaving her and that she was becoming every instant more and more enamored of Gerald Redburn. "Now, pray leave me alone."

"One more kiss on that fair hand, and I take my departure."

"Now go," she said, having for a moment yielded him her hand. "Go, I beseech you?"—and she spoke with an hysterical kind of nervousness, as if battling against the yielding weakness that was coming over her.

"Good bye," said Gerald. "But remember, if you wish to see me again, a note delivered at the Manor will bring me immediately hither."

With these words he issued forth from the cottage, slipping a guinea into Sarah's hand as a bribe to ensure her silence in respect to the caress which she had seen him bestow upon

her mistress. As he retraced his way towards the Manor House, he could scarcely bring himself to believe that the scene which had just taken place was a reality and not a dream. A man of his disposition was naturally astonished that a woman whom he had regarded as being so vain, thoughtless, and frivolous—so accessible to flattery, so easily cajoled by compliments—should have had the courage to stop short when she appeared to be hurrying along the road to ruin. But still he felt persuaded that it was only a transient apprehension—a temporary feeling of remorse, which had made her hesitate; and hence that sudden proposal he had made that she would accept some present he was to send her on the morrow. He had fancied that success in this amour was a matter of certainty, and likewise of comparative ease. He found it difficult, though he still felt confident of ultimate triumph. The repulse he had experienced strengthened his desire to achieve that triumph; and according to his libertine notions he considered that his very credit as a successful lady's-man was at stake,—so that to him it appeared necessary for his own pride's satisfaction that he should accomplish a victory.

At breakfast-time on the following morning he intimated that he intended to ride over to Middleton, to make some purchases which he required. Accordingly, mounting his horse, he proceeded to that town, where he bought a very handsome silk dress, and a box of kid gloves. These he ordered to be made up into a parcel and addressed to Mrs. Davis, with a written memorandum that it was "to be left at the Royal Oak, Oakleigh, till called for." He then gave instructions to the mercer of whom he purchased the articles, to forward the parcel by the van, leaving the money to pay the carriage. All this being done, he rode back to the Manor House, which he reached by lunch time. When this repast was over, he invited Lady Adela Clive to take a walk through the grounds. She was about to refuse; but a look from her mother made her murmur forth an affirmative answer. But throughout the ramble she was cold and distant, though entirely courteous and well-bred even in her very reserve. Her demeanor was invested with a certain maidenly dignity, which displayed the high-minded character of the young lady in one of its noblest phases.

A fortnight passed: the Countess of Burton and Adela had now been a month at the Manor House; and all things appeared to be progressing in accordance with the views and wishes of the young lady's mother, the Baronet, and his wife. Every day Adela walked out with Captain Redburn: but her deportment towards him was still that of dignified coldness. He was far from being so inexperienced as not to observe it: indeed he understood it but too well. He saw that Lady Adela disliked him, and that she merely tolerated his addresses in obedience to the commands of her mother. He himself became more and more enamored of the young lady—that is to say, of her personal beauty: for as to *love* in its purest and holiest meaning, he was incapable of the sentiment. It even gave him pleasure to think that she would be com-



pled to yield to the wishes of her parent and accompany him to the altar: there would be in the mere act of forcing her thither a revenge for the coldness which she now demonstrated towards him.

But during this fortnight, what had been passing in the mind of Mrs. Davis? The reader has seen that though in the first instance she had welcomed Captain Redburn to the cottage in the thoughtless humor of one who was flattered at the presence of such a visitor, she had rapidly conceived a more tender feeling towards him. In her eyes his pale countenance became interesting—his emaciated figure appeared a symmetrical slenderness—his flippant discourse an off-landed frankness. She hated her husband, too: Gerald had encouraged the feeling—and this conduct on his part she had regarded as sympathy with what she called her domestic sorrows. She looked upon herself as an injured wife, never reflecting that her own temper had driven her husband away from his home to pass the evenings at the public-house. It is most dangerous when a young man shows, or is believed to show, sympathy with a young wife who fancies herself the object of tyranny on the part of an elderly husband. Such was Mrs. Davis's position; and when alone of an evening, she thought to herself that it would be a consolation if Captain Redburn were just to drop in and have a chat with her. Moreover, that handsome present which he sent her from Middleton had gratified her vanity in more ways than one. She had not sufficient courage to reject the gift, because she loved finery, and also because she considered it as a proof of Redburn's affection. She gradually reasoned herself into the belief that though he intended to marry Lady Adela from worldly motives, yet that she herself possessed his love. Her head was soon turned with these fancies: and almost every day her fingers itched to pen a few lines to Captain Redburn and invite him to pass an evening with her. But throughout the fortnight she had sufficient courage, blended with sufficient apprehensions, to make her throw down the pen every time she took it up; and in her better moments she rejoiced at her fortitude.

But at the expiration of this fortnight, when she remembered that in two weeks more Captain Redburn's leave of absence would expire, she could no longer resist the temptation. She accordingly wrote a few lines inviting him to visit her; and carefully sealing the note, she gave it to Sarah to take up to the Manor, with instructions to make a pretence of visiting the servants there and of watching an opportunity to deliver the billet into Captain Redburn's own hand. She felt certain that Sarah was discreet; and she knew full well that Gerald would give the woman a golden reward for her secrecy. Sarah acquitted herself of the commission according to the order she had received; and when she returned to the cottage with the intimation that Captain Redburn would be there between eight and nine o'clock, Mrs. Davis felt a tremor pass through her entire frame as her heart was smitten with regret at what she had done.

But it was too late to retreat; and as the

hours passed by, that feeling wore off, and she looked forward with a fluttering sensation of pleasure to the expected visit. A little before eight o'clock, Mr. Davis went forth as usual; and Kitty ascended to her chamber to perform her toilet. She found herself insensibly gliding into pleasurable sensations as she arranged her hair and put on the very handsome silk dress which Captain Redburn had sent her from Middleton. She gazed in the glass: the heightened color of her cheeks, and the light that was dancing in her eyes, added to her good looks; and the survey was therefore completely satisfactory. She then descended to the parlor, where a cheerful fire was blazing in the grate, for the autumn evenings were now cold; and she spread with her own hands upon the table, the wine and the dessert provided for the occasion.

At about half-past eight, Gerald Redburn made his appearance; and the moment he was alone with Mrs. Davis, he pressed her hand, with every evidence of enthusiasm, to his lips, assuring her that her billet had afforded him the most unfeigned pleasure. He observed at a glance that her toilet had been carefully studied; and he understood full well the vanity which had made her seek to render herself as fascinating as possible for the occasion. She really did look uncommonly well—prettier than he had ever seen her before; and he felt an inward glow of triumph at the idea of approaching success.

"You must think very ill of me," she said, when they were seated at the table, "to have written to you—"

"Very ill!" he ejaculated. "On the contrary, it gave me infinite pleasure. How can any one think ill of a pretty woman who suffers him to perceive that he is not an object of indifference to her? You look perfectly resplendent this evening. What a pity it is you are confined in this humble cottage! You ought to be in a splendid drawing-room. Not but that everything is quite comfortable here: I am only speaking comparatively."

"Do you really mean me to understand," she asked, with a languishing tenderness, "that you care anything for me?"

"How can you put such a question? Why am I here, if I did not? why was I so ready to obey your summons?"

"Yes; I think you like me—a little," she murmured, tremulously; "because you know how unhappy I am at home—you have sympathized with me—you have shown a friendly feeling; but then, perhaps, you dearly love Adela?"

"I mean to marry her," rejoined Redburn; "but as for love, it's quite another thing. I love you, Kitty; and if you were single, I would marry you."

"No, no—I cannot believe that. When I was single—"

"Ah, but then I did not know you so well as I do now; and you really were not half so pretty. You have improved wonderfully in the last two or three years."

"Do you really think so?" she said, flattered by the assurance.

"I think so, or I should not say it. Come, do not be coy," he added, as she somewhat re-

luctantly yielded him her hand again; but when he attempted to transfer his lips from that hand to her cheek, she drew back, and repulsed him truly. "How nonsensical you are, Kitty!" he said, with an access of ill-humor.

"No, no, I do not think so!" she cried, a sudden revulsion of feeling taking place, and a sense of the impropriety of her conduct becoming paramount again; while a pang of remorse for having committed herself by inviting him back, shot through her heart.

"Well, but if you have merely sent for me," said Captain Redburn, angrily, "to become the object of your whims and caprices—to see you play off your prudery and fastidious airs—I can tell you that I do not choose to be made such a fool of."

"No, no!" ejaculated Mrs Davis, with an hysterical nervousness that was very far from being affected, but was indeed most real: "I would not for the world have you think that I sought to trifle with you; and as for insulting you in the manner to which you allude, I am incapable of it. But surely—surely, if I feel contrition for what I have done—if my eyes are opened, and I see that I have been acting imprudently and incorrectly——"

"All this is mere stuff and nonsense—child's talk!" interrupted Gerald; for as the color mounted to the lady's cheeks in the excitement of her feelings, she looked too handsome at the moment for him to abandon the hope and the intent which he had entertained with regard to her. "Come, dear Kitty," he continued, once more adopting a coaxing and cajoling tone, "get rid of these silly scruples——"

"O Gerald—Gerald!" she murmured, "you will be the ruin of me! What am I to do? Have mercy upon me! I feel that I am in your power—I have gone too far—you have a right to treat me as you will; but still I conjure and implore——"

"Kitty, you are truly beautiful!" interrupted Gerald, passing his arm round her waist, and pressing his lips to hers.

At that moment the door opened, and Sarah entered the room. A shriek escaped from the lips of Mrs. Davis, as she tore herself away from Captain Redburn's arms; while he, covered with confusion, was for a few instants utterly at a loss how to act. Sarah, who appeared to have intruded only for the purpose of inquiring whether Mrs. Davis chose to have supper served up, put the question with as much calmness as if she had observed nothing wrong; and Gerald, hastily drawing her aside, slipped four or five guineas into her hand, whispering, "You are a discreet and faithful woman: we rely upon you. Pray be cautious: for Davis is as jealous as an ogre; and it would not do to create a scene."

While he was thus endeavoring to put a golden seal upon the woman's lips, Mrs. Davis rushed from the room, almost in a frenzied condition of mind—and sped up to her own chamber. Gerald was half inclined to quit the cottage at once: but he thought that perhaps it was a mere transient ebullition of feeling on her part, and that she would descend again presently, when it had subsided. He accordingly

lingered in the parlor—poured out a glass of wine—drank it—and then paced to and fro, still uncertain how to act. Meanwhile Sarah, having received the bribe, quitted the room. In a few minutes Gerald heard a door open up-stairs, and he said to himself, "She's coming back again. I was sure she would—it was only a sudden fright."

But he was disappointed: for Mrs. Davis, instead of descending the stairs, called out for Sarah to come up to her; and she spoke in a voice that was full of a nervous trepidation.

"What the deuce can this mean?" thought Captain Redburn to himself: and he waited to see the result.

Sarah, having obeyed her mistress's summons, almost immediately came down stairs again; and entering the parlor, she closed the door in a cautious, deliberate manner.

"Well, what is it?" demanded Gerald impatiently. "Is your mistress coming down again?"

"No, sir," responded the woman, whose countenance wore a serious expression. "She requests that you will take your departure at once."

"Oh, that is the end of it—eh?" exclaimed Gerald, both angry and mortified. "There never was such folly—and I am a stark staring fool for my pains."

With these words he put on his hat, snatched up his gloves, and abruptly quitted the house. On his way back to the Manor, he thought to himself, "Kitty loves me—she is deeply enamored of me—and she will be sending for me again. But may I be hanged if I'll go! I would not give a farthing to succeed in that quarter now, after so much prudery and nonsense. Why, if it were known, it's enough to make me the laughing-stock of every-body who might hear of it. I will have nothing more to do with the affair, and by my contemptuous neglect, Kitty will be well punished for having trifled with me."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

On the following morning the Redburn family, together with their lady-guests the Countess of Burton and Adela Clive, were seated at the usual hour at the breakfast-table, when a footman entered and placed several letters and newspapers by the Baronet's side. Having just glanced at the addresses of those letters, and judging by the hand-writing that they were of no particular consequence, Sir Archibald put them aside for perusal after breakfast, and proceeded to open one of the London journals which had arrived. For the first few minutes his looks wandered over the columns in a casual indifferent manner, as if he found nothing very attractive in their contents; but suddenly he uttered an ejaculation, and at the same moment his interest appeared to be riveted on something which had just caught his eye.

"Anything particular?" inquired Lady Redburn.



"No, nothing—that is to say, nothing of any consequence," stammered the Baronet: "merely a political announcement, but which has no interest for ladies."

"The mobs are all quiet throughout the country, I hope?" said her ladyship.

"How can it be otherwise," interjected Aunt Jane, "when the nation is blessed with such gallant soldiers as our Gerald here, to over-awe the multitudes?"

"I will thank you to keep your observations to yourself," said the Captain, bitterly annoyed at being thus made to appear ridiculous in the presence of Adela and her mother.

The door now again opened; and the footman announced the Rev Mr. Arden. He had an important look; and it was not difficult to perceive that something had occurred in the village, the intelligence of which he had lost no time in bringing to the Manor House.

"Well, Arden, any news?" inquired the Baronet, when the usual complimentary greetings had been exchanged and the clergyman had taken a seat: but while he put the question, Sir Archibald retained the newspaper in his hand, although he desisted from reading it.

"Such an excitement at Oakleigh!" responded Mr. Arden. "Not that I am at all surprised at what has happened: indeed, I always expected it would end somehow or another in that way."

"But what is it?" demanded Sir Archibald somewhat impatiently.

"Nothing more nor less than this—that Peter Davis, your bailiff, turned his wife out of doors last night."

Gerald let fall his knife and fork with which he was eating some pigeon-pie: but no one appeared to take any particular notice of what seemed to be an accident—unless it were Aunt Jane, whose cold glassy azure eyes were suddenly fixed upon him in a searching manner.

"Turned out of doors!" ejaculated the Baronet. "And what for?"

"Dear me, how cruel!" said Lady Redburn, as she sipped her chocolate. "But I don't think it rained in the night, although there might have been a heavy dew; and it must be very inconvenient to be turned out of doors at the risk of getting damp feet, cold, and rheumatism, and all that sort of thing."

"It does not appear," continued Mr. Arden, "that Mrs. Davis wandered about all night, as your ladyship seems to apprehend: for she went straight home to her father's house—and there she is at present."

"But what was it all about?" inquired the Baronet. "I am afraid Davis has lately been frequenting the public-house more than he ought. Indeed, I know that he has: for he admitted as much to me that night when I went down to the Oak about Bates's business."

"It is not as yet known," continued Mr. Arden, "what induced the bailiff to have recourse to such an extreme measure. The Colycynths did not send for me the first thing this morning, as they ought to have done, to make me acquainted with all the circumstances and ask for my advice. Considering that I am——"

"Their spiritual pastor and master," interjected Aunt Jane: "that's in the Catechism."

"Well, but this is a most extraordinary proceeding," said the Baronet; and now he laid the newspaper upon the table: but as Aunt Jane immediately caught it up, he exclaimed, "Don't take that, my dear. I want it!"—and he reached forth his hand for her to give it back again.

"I shall not detain it many minutes," she replied, with her habitual cold imperturbability; "and you can discuss the village scandal with Mr. Arden in the meantime."

"But I had not done reading the paper," said the Baronet, evidently much annoyed that he had let it go out of his hand, and vainly endeavoring to conceal the vexation he felt at his inadvertence.

Aunt Jane took no notice of this last remonstrance; but with the most provoking self-will, as her brother considered it to be, she persisted in reading the paper. He fidgetted uneasily upon his chair for a few moments; but perceiving that his manner was exciting attention, he at once sought to divert it by turning to Mr. Arden and renewing the conversation relative to the intelligence which that gentleman had brought.

"But is there no suspicion afloat," he inquired, "as to the cause of this proceeding on Davis's part?"

"I have heard of nothing specific," was Mr. Arden's response. "No doubt some levity, or else the discovery of some fresh extravagance, in respect to his wife, has induced Mr. Davis to adopt such a course. It is an extreme measure, and could only be justified by some very gross misconduct on his wife's part. Whatever it is, the Colycynths no doubt hope to hush the matter up without any farther scandal."

Again did the door open, and a footman entered bearing a note, which he handed to the Baronet, who immediately exclaimed, "This is Davis's hand-writing! Perhaps we shall now learn something."

Captain Redburn was all this while a prey to feelings which may be more easily imagined than described. That it was in consequence of his flirtation with Kitty, her husband had expelled her from his house, had naturally occurred to him at once; and it likewise struck him that Sarah must have played a treacherous part. It was not that he cared for anything which his parents might say upon the subject: but he was fearful that if a full exposure took place, he should lose the beautiful Adela Clive. From the moment of dropping his knife and fork until that when the footman brought in the note from Davis, he had been sitting upon thorns,—doing his best however to veil his uneasiness by a still more vigorous attack upon the pigeon pie. But now that this letter was brought in, he could not help watching with intense eagerness the countenance of his father, who was opening the missive.

"Why, what can this possibly mean?" ejaculated the Baronet, with an air of the most unfeigned astonishment as he ran his eyes over the note. "Davis resigns his situation in my service; and in such a laconic way, it is pos-

tively rude—ungrateful to a degree—most in proper.”

“Read it aloud,” said Aunt Jane: and once more were her glassy eyes turned with a sort of malignant significance upon Gerald, who colored like a peony—and to hide his confusion, was suddenly seized with a fit of coughing, so that he averted his face and held up his handkerchief.

“This is what Davis says,” continued the Baronet; and he read the note, which ran as follows:—

“Sir,

“Circumstances compel me to resign at once the situation which so many years I have had the honor of holding upon your estate. As business of importance calls me at once to Middleton, where I may be for some days, I have to request that you will lose no time in appointing my successor; as I shall be unable to perform my duties any longer. I have already given instructions to have the cottage cleared of all my furniture; so that it will be ready in the course of the day to receive a new occupant.

“I remain, Sir,

“Your obedient humble servant,  
“PETER DAVIS.”

“Are all his accounts right?” inquired Lady Redburn: “for it looks very suspicious and very odd.”

“It was but the other day I went over his accounts,” returned the Baronet; “and they were perfectly accurate. No; it is nothing of that kind which has driven Davis to this step. I can’t understand it.”

“Perhaps it will all transpire in due course,” said Aunt Jane, with another malignant glance at Gerald. “But I do not see any particular political announcement in this paper. The only thing of consequence is the sudden death of—”

“My dear, my dear,” interrupted the Baronet hastily; “pray don’t talk of death. The subject is so gloomy!”

“Mr. Arden will tell you,” rejoined Aunt Jane, “that we always ought to have our ideas fixed upon the transitory state of our being. Poor Ferdinand Stansfield! to have fallen dead of apoplexy in such a manner—it is really quite shocking! But it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good; and now the nephew Reginald Herbert is heir to the title and estates.”

Captain Redburn, on hearing his aunt make this announcement, glanced quickly at Lady Adela Clive; and at once saw that she had suddenly become a prey to an immense excitement, which she could not possibly conceal. The color went and came in rapid transitions upon her cheeks—she trembled visibly—and her confusion increased to such an extent that she could not restrain her tears. Ah! they were tears of suddenly awakened hope—tears called forth by an ineffable tenderness of feeling—tears that flowed from a source the existence of which only those who have well and truly loved, and whose love has encountered cruel obstacles, can properly understand! The Countess of Burton

looked at her daughter—but said nothing. The Baronet and Lady Redburn exchanged quick glances of uneasiness: Mr. Arden, who perfectly well understood the aspect of affairs, gazed slowly around on all present:—while Aunt Jane, completely satisfied with the excitement she had produced, went on reading the paper as coldly and imperturbably as if nothing had happened. For upwards of a minute the silence that ensued was most awkward and embarrassing: no one seemed to dare to break it—because no one, even if inclined to speak, knew not what to say. But all in a moment the scene acquired an augmented interest: for Adela Clive, overwhelmed with confusion, and feeling it to be impossible to conquer her emotions, abruptly rose from her seat and quitted the room. The Countess of Burton hesitated for an instant what course to adopt: and with all her wonted presence of mind, and coldly calculating worldly disposition, she was bewildered and embarrassed. But thinking it best to put a certain complexion on her daughter’s behavior, she likewise rose, observing, “I am afraid Adela is ill:”—and hurried from the apartment.

“Why, what is the matter?” asked Aunt Jane, slowly raising her eyes from the newspaper and looking around her in unfeigned astonishment. “Have you said or done anything rude, Gerald, to offend your intended? for I know that you can be an unmannerly boy at times.”

But the Captain, not condescending to give his aunt any re-pose, rose from his seat and walked to the window, whence he pretended to gaze forth, but where he vainly endeavored to stifle the chagrined feeling he experienced at having acquired the assurance that Lady Adela was deeply attached to Reginald Herbert. Ah, this name!—much as he had hated it before, he now loathed and detested it with all the power of his natural malignity!

“Had you not better go, my dear,” said the Baronet to his wife. “and see how Lady Adela is.”

“I think not, Sir Archy—I think not,” responded her ladyship: and then with a significant glance, she added, “The Countess will do all that is needful.”

“Perhaps so,” said the Baronet; and by way of turning the conversation, lest Aunt Jane should thrust in any more of her malicious observations, he exclaimed, “But about this fellow Davis?”

Gerald had already heard quite enough—indeed too much respecting the bailiff and his wife; and he quitted the room quite as abruptly as Lady Adela and her mother had done a few minutes previously. Lighting his cigar, and taking his dogs with him, he walked down into the village for the purpose of ascertaining, if possible, some particulars relative to Kitty’s abrupt expulsion from her home. As he passed the bailiff’s cottage, he saw a van at the door, and some men moving out all the furniture; but he did not observe Sarah the woman-servant assisting. He had a great mind to approach the cottage and see if she were there, so as to learn whether she had really betrayed him, or whether Davis’s jealousy had been excited from



any other quarter: but, on a second thought, he decided that it would be better not to look after the woman—because, if she had proved treacherous, she would scarcely confess it; and in any case it would seem odd—perhaps suspicious—if he went making inquiries. So he walked on into the village; and entering the Royal Oak, called for a glass of brandy and soda-water. Bushell promptly served the beverage; and Gerald endeavored to lead him into conversation respecting Davis and his wife: but the landlord knew no more than Mr. Arden in respect to the details. It was now mid-day; and from what Bushell stated, Mrs. Davis had not stirred out of her parents' house all the morning: nor indeed had her mother or sisters;—but it had not been noticed that Dr. Colyinth, on going his usual rounds, was grave, taciturn, and evidently much afflicted.

Having learnt little more than he already knew, Gerald retraced his way to the Manor. As he entered the house, his mother happened to be descending the staircase at the moment; and she beckoned him into a parlor.

"I know what is passing in your mind, Gerald," she said: "but there is nothing to annoy you. I have had a private conversation with the Countess: and everything remains as it did—that is to say, provided you give a satisfactory answer relative to one little circumstance which appears rather to trouble her."

"And what the deuce is that?" inquired the Captain, although he could very well guess to what circumstance his mother had alluded.

"Ah!" she said, with evident satisfaction: "I see by your manner that the fears of the Countess are altogether unfounded; and I assured her that they were. Indeed, I was quite astonished that she could have hinted at such a thing: but it was no doubt because of the malignant insinuations that Aunt Jane threw out——"

"What are you talking about, mother?" demanded Gerald, still affecting to be ignorant of the subject that was uppermost in his thoughts.

"Oh! I forgot that I had not told you: but of course it is too absurd. The Countess fancied, somehow or another, that you were not altogether a stranger to the affairs of these Davises——"

"What the devil are the Davises to me?" interrupted Gerald, with affected contempt.

"What indeed?" exclaimed his mother: "*that* is precisely the question I put to the Countess. But Aunt Jane threw such significant looks at you when we were talking about the Davises at the breakfast-table——"

"I hate Aunt Jane!" cried Captain Redburn, with a bitterness that was thoroughly sincere.

"And I shall soon hate her too," responded his mother, "if she tries to make mischief. If it hadn't been for her nasty officiousness, Adela would not have heard of Ferdinand Stansfield's death, and the change which has therefore taken place in Reginald Herbert's prospects. Adela never reads the newspaper; and your father would have kept the thing quiet, if it hadn't been for that meddling mischief-making sister of his."

"But what does it matter," asked Gerald "since you yourself assured me the other day that Adela does not care a fig for this Mr. Reginald Herbert? I begin to think—in fact, I have thought so pretty nearly all along, since I first heard his name mentioned—that she cares more for him than you choose to admit. Of course, mother, as you have got eyes, you could not avoid seeing how she turned the moment Aunt Jane mentioned Ferdinand Stansfield's death."

"Oh! you must not care for the silly emotions of a young artless creature like her. The Countess assures me that present arrangements shall stand as they are. And now I will go and tell her that I have had a very long and serious conversation with you about these Davises, and that you have pledged me your most solemn and sacred word of honor that you had nothing to do with the matter."

"To be sure! Say that—say anything. But, mother, don't you think it would be better, under all circumstances, if I were now to pop the question to Lady Adela as soon as possible?"

"Leave it all to me," replied Lady Redburn "I will speak to the Countess upon the subject."

With these words she hastened from the room; and Gerald feeling pretty well assured that Lady Adela would not take her usual walk that day, mounted his horse and galloped across the country. He did not return till dinner-time: for he had no inclination to be catechised by his father in respect to the Davises, and he did not choose to expose himself more than was absolutely necessary to the malignant observations of Aunt Jane. He did not therefore proceed to the drawing-room till within a few minutes of the usual hour when the dinner-bell rang. On entering that apartment, he found Lady Adela seated between her mother and his own on the sofa. She looked exceedingly pale, and ever-care-worn. And no wonder!—for her mother had given her positively to understand that she must regard Captain Redburn as her future husband. As to the Baronet, he was well satisfied to perceive that affairs still progressed according to his wishes; while Aunt Jane sat more silent than was even her wont, but appeared to have a certain malignity twinkling in her usual dull glassy eyes. The dinner-bell rang—the meal passed away somewhat heavily—and in the evening Lady Adela requested to be excused, on the plea of headache, from taking her seat at the piano.—Not even the remonstrating look which her mother gave her, could induce the young lady to withdraw her refusal; and this was almost the first time she had failed to sacrifice her own wishes to those of her parent. But on the present occasion, she felt much too miserable to send forth the enlivening strains of music.

The evening passed away languidly and dull; and the inmates of the Manor retired to their respective chambers somewhat earlier than usual. On the following morning they gathered at the breakfast-table at the wonted hour; and Gerald observed that Lady Adela Clive looked more care-worn than on the preceding evening. She was likewise colder and more distant to

warded himself than she ever yet had been; and she received in glacial silence the little attentions he showed her,—acknowledging them only with a slight inclination of the head. The Countess of Burton from time to time darted angry and reproachful looks at her daughter: but the young lady did not observe them—and even if she had, she felt too profoundly wretched to assume a cheerfulness of spirits.

Presently a footman entered with the morning's letters and newspapers; and as the Baronet examined the addresses of the former, he took up one, saying, "This is for you, Gerald. It bears the Middleton post-mark. I should know this hand writing. It is Fleecewell, the attorney's. What can he possibly want with you?" And Sir Archibald Redburn retained the letter in his hand as if he was half inclined to open it.

"I am sure I can't think what Fleecewell can want with me," observed Gerald, carelessly and indifferently: indeed he spoke the truth—as notwithstanding his extravagances, he owed no money, for the simple reason that his father allowed him as much as he wanted. "Hand over the letter, and we'll soon see what it contains."

"Should you like me to read it for you?" asked Aunt Jane, as she received the document from her brother in order to pass it to her nephew.

"I'm sure I don't mind," responded the Captain, with an air of disdainful indifference: for he thought to himself that Aunt Jane fancied it was concerning something he would like kept concealed; and as on this head he experienced the most overweening confidence, he thought he might obtain at a very cheap rate a character for frankness and open-heartedness in the estimation of the Countess and Lady Adela. "Oh, yes! open it—and read it aloud, by all means!" he exclaimed. "I have no secrets, thank God! and so you are welcome to see what it says."

"Very good," said Aunt Jane dryly: then without any more ado, she opened the letter; and as calmly and deliberately as if it were a mere invitation to dinner, read its contents in the following manner:—

"No. 7, High Street, Middleton,

"June 14th, 1835.

*Davis v. Yourself*

"Sir,

"I am instructed by Mr. Peter Davis to commence legal proceedings against you, and enter an action of damages for the seduction of my client's wife, Catherine Davis. I will therefore thank you to acquaint me by return of post with the name of your solicitor, who will accept the usual process on your behalf.

"Your obedient Servant,

"FRANCIS FLEECEWELL.

"Captain Redburn."

Not a word was spoken by any of the listeners while Aunt Jane so calmly and deliberately read this letter. Gerald himself was overwhelmed with confusion; the Baronet and Lady Redburn sat aghast. The Countess of Burton's face grew grave and ominous, even to

a degree of awful solemnity: but as for Lady Adela, she scarcely paid any attention to the document, and certainly obtained but a very vague and general notion of its contents. The moment Aunt Jane had concluded the reading of the letter, the Countess of Burton rose—stern, dignified, and implacable—from her seat; and taking her daughter's hand, she said in a freezing voice, "Come, Adela: we will make immediate preparations for our departure."

Sir Archibald Redburn sprang from his chair—seized the letter from Aunt Jane's hand—and vociferated in a towering passion, "It's all through your cursed malignity!"

"He told me to read it," was her quiet response: and she went on eating her toast as if nothing were the matter.

Lady Redburn, awakening from her stupor of consternation, at first thought of speeding in pursuit of the Countess of Burton and endeavoring to allay the storm: then she thought of abusing her son: next of tearing Aunt Jane's eyes out: and lastly of upbraiding her husband for handing his sister the letter. But not being able to settle her mind upon any one of these proceedings, she thought it best to go off into hysterics—and did so accordingly. Sir Archibald tore at the bell to summon her ladyship's maids: for Aunt Jane offered not to render the slightest assistance—and Gerald, availing himself of the confusion, slipped from the room. Throwing on his hat, he hurried forth from the mansion; and repairing to a knot of trees at a little distance, flung himself on the grass under their shade to reflect upon all that had taken place. In about half an hour he perceived the Countess of Burton's own carriage drive round to the front entrance of the Manor: he beheld his father hand her ladyship and Adela into the vehicle: he saw the two lady's maids ascend to the rumble; and then the equipage drove rapidly away.

"Adela is lost to me," he said to himself, accompanying the remark with a bitter imprecation; and perhaps Captain Redburn never felt more humiliated or more mortified in all his life than he did at that moment.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE CANTEN.

WE must now return to the Lonsdales, whom we left at Manchester. Lucy was aware that her husband had written that letter which the condemned barber received in the gaol at Middleton—a letter wherein our hero had poured forth all the rancor of an envenomed spirit against his bitterest enemy. Yes: poor Lucy was aware that he had penned and despatched that letter; for he had made no secret of it to his wife. He had even read it over to her with a kind of gloating ferocity and savage satisfaction that did her harm to behold. She ventured gently to remonstrate against such a manifestation of triumph over a fallen enemy: but Frederick was inexorable—and he cut his wife short with more abruptness and a manner



more approaching to angry petulance than he had ever before exhibited. Lucy turned aside to conceal her tears; and then Frederick, perceiving, that she wept, clasped her in his arms—implored her pardon if he had spoken hastily—but did not either keep back the letter or modify its contents.

Lucy now hoped that as her husband's vengeance was appeased in respect to Bates, he would recover a somewhat more healthy tone of mind. And such, during the lapse of a few weeks after he had despatched that letter, proved to be the case. He ceased to speak of his wrongs; he endeavored to seem as cheerful as possible; but to a great extent, these spirits were forced; and that such was the case, his manner sometimes betrayed—for the scars of infamy were upon his back, and the indelible brand of a still deeper infamy on his side! That he had undergone the branding process, he had carefully kept secret from his wife; and Lucy indeed remained unaware of it.

When he read in a newspaper that Bates had escaped from the custody of those who were conveying him, together with other convicts, to the sea-port whence the ship was to sail for New South Wales, he experienced a feeling as if a sad calamity had happened to himself. Indeed, his vengeance was disappointed—that vengeance which he had taken such trouble to gratify, and over the first success of which he had gloated so ferociously. It now suddenly appeared to him as if he had a fresh task to accomplish—a fresh deed to do. He endeavored to conceal the state of his mind from his affectionate wife; but she saw that something new had occurred to annoy him; and when she besought him to unbosom these fresh sorrows, whatever they might be, he only gave an evasive reply. She therefore said nothing more; but for some days he continued so moody, gloomy, and strange in his looks and manner, that she became frightened. She fancied that he was experiencing renewed tyrannies in his regiment, and that he forbore from mentioning them, in order not to afflict her. Entertaining this belief, and giving him the credit for such a feeling, her heart yearned so devotedly towards him, that, if it were possible for her love to be increased, it was increased then.

We should observe, that as several weeks had now elapsed since Lucy's arrival in Manchester, she had obtained work, and was enabled to earn a comfortable subsistence, as she had done at Portsmouth. The routine of their life would have been pretty well the same as it had been there, were it not that Frederick himself was becoming an altered man. It was perfectly true that he passed nearly all his leisure time at the lodging, and that he yielded not to the temptations of dissipation. He had still sufficient command over himself to avoid having recourse to drinking, in order to drown his cares: he was still sober—indeed, most temperate, steady, and well-conducted. But it was in his mood and his manner that he was changing. He undertook to teach little Freddy, as he had been wont to do: but, in the midst of the lessons, he would fall into fits of abstraction—or, he would suddenly start up from his chair, and,

with an involuntary impulsiveness, begin to pace to and fro in his room. Then his wife would lay down her work—gently approach him—throw her arms round his neck—and entreat, in the most affectionate and endearing terms, that he would exert his fortitude to think less painfully of the past, and more hopefully of the future. On such occasions as these, he would strain that admirable woman to his breast—he would promise everything she asked—he would embrace their son in his turn—he would resume his seat—and the lessons would go on uninterruptedly for hours. Perhaps, indeed, the black mood would not return again throughout that day—at least not ostensibly, however insidiously the shadow might steal back upon the heart that beat unseen within. But still that black mood *would* come back: and as Lucy bent over her work, frequent were the looks which she stole at her husband; and if she beheld his countenance expressive of placidity, she would feel a fervid thankfulness in her soul: but if, on the other hand, she beheld the shade settling gradually on that loved face, a pang of direst agony would shoot through her bosom.

One morning—about a fortnight after Bates's escape—Lonsdale had occasion to hurry to the lodging, between breakfast and the parade-time, to fetch something he had left there on the previous day. Being in a great hurry, he rushed up stairs and burst into the room—when, to his mingled terror and dismay, he beheld his Lucy stretched senseless on the bed, the woman of the house administering restoratives, and little Freddy crying bitterly. At that instant, and at that spectacle, every other thought was banished from Lonsdale's mind, save the love he bore for his own beautiful and devoted wife: and, half-frenzied, he feared she was at the point of death. The woman of the house, however, reassured him; and as Lucy now began to show symptoms of returning animation, the husband's worst apprehensions were tranquilized.

"What was it? what caused it? what ails my beloved Lucy?" he asked, still immensely excited.

"I think it was all on account of that letter," said the woman—and she pointed towards the table.

"Yes, it was, papa," said little Frederick, in a voice almost choked with sobs. "The moment mamma read it she fell down on the carpet—"

Lonsdale rushed to the table—snatched up the letter—and with feelings that may be more easily conceived than described, read the following words:—

"Mrs. Lonsdale,

"Your husband has done his best to get me sent out of the country; but he has not succeeded. You may tell him I received his rascally letter that he sent me to Middleton gaol, but I will be revenged for it. I will stick to him through life. And now I am going to tell you a secret: for I know Frederick Lonsdale quite well enough to be aware that he would do his best to keep the thing from you. You

know he has been flogged twice: but I'll be bound you *do not* know that he has been branded! Yes—branded like another Cain! Ask him to show the letter **D** stamped just under his left arm: ask him to show you *that*!

"The eternal enemy of your husband,

"OBADIAH BATES.

"P. S. Don't let him flatter himself, if he sees this, that because it bears the London postmark I shall be easily found out. I am not quite such a fool."

A low moan, like one of mortal anguish, escaped slowly from the throat of Frederick Lonsdale, when he reached that part in the letter which revealed the secret of what he regarded as the crowning ignominy of his life. All hell appeared to rage in his breast; and if Obadiah Bates had entered the room at that moment, Lonsdale would have assassinated him then and there. When he had finished the letter, he crushed it with convulsive violence in his hands; then he tore it with a sort of rabid fury into the minutest fragments, and stamped upon them with rage. His countenance was white as a sheet; but his features writhed spasmodically—his eyes literally glared. The ferocity of a hyena possessed the unfortunate man at that moment. The woman of the house, who was unacquainted with the contents of the letter, gazed upon him in astonishment—the boy in the stupor of dismay. Lucy was now recovering; and opening her eyes, she shrieked on beholding her husband—for the conviction flashed in a moment to her mind that he had read that fearful letter. He rushed towards her—he raised her up on the bed—he strained her to his breast: she wound her arms about his neck, embracing him with an almost frantic vehemence. When the first paroxysm of emotions was past, he beckoned the landlady to withdraw: and then all in a moment a sudden change came over him. The dark mood seized upon him; and he stood, with folded arms, gazing upon his wife and child with no expression of dreary, dismal, forlorn despair. Lucy, now galvanized as it were into complete life, sprang from the couch—folded her husband again in her arms—and besought him to be comforted.

"Lucy," he said, in a deep hollow whisper, which she alone heard, and the sense of which the boy could not catch: "am I not a branded wretch? am I fit to possess the love of a pure and spotless being such as you?"

"Oh, Frederick! what words are these!" she murmured, amidst convulsions of grief. "Is it possible that my love could be changed towards you? For God's sake talk not thus to me again!"—then as a sudden reminiscence flashed to her mind, she said, "But how is it that you are here! The parade——"

"True!" ejaculated Lonsdale; and in a bitter tone he added, "They must not have an opportunity of stigmatizing me as a deserter again!"

With these words, he burst away from the presence of his wife and child, and reached the barracks only just in time to put on his cross-belts—seize his musket—and fall into the ranks. But throughout the parade he moved like a

mere automaton—moving indeed only because his comrade on his right and his comrade on his left moved in a particular way, and went through particular manipulations with the musket. All that Lonsdale did was purely mechanical. He heard not the words of command: even the music of the band was but a dull, droning incomprehensible sound in his ears. His comrades nearest to him saw that he was very strange, and fancied that he was intoxicated—although his countenance was pale as ash. Fortunate was it for him that neither Langley nor any of the officers noticed his peculiarity of manner; or else he would indeed have been denounced as under the influence of liquor, and would have been punished accordingly. He felt like a man who was walking in a dream: a hideous nightmare was weighing upon him, paralyzing his mind, but not the power of physical locomotion. When the parade was over, he was awakened from that stupor of the senses by the questions with which he was plied by those of his comrades who had especially marked his singular mood.

"Why, Lonsdale, my dear fellow," said one, in a tone of good natured banter, "you are breaking out. This is quite a new thing for you, isn't it? You must take deuced good care that Langley don't see you: for mind, your name is down in the black book."

"Why, what do you think?" ejaculated Frederick, almost fiercely: "that I have been drinking?"

"I don't think about it," was the response: "I know you have. Anybody can tell *that*. But where's the blame, after all? One must drown one's cares sometimes: and heaven knows that us poor devils of private soldiers have got enough of them at times?"

"Ah! drown one's cares?" repeated Lonsdale, in an abstracted mood. "Does drink do that?"

"Why, of course it does: and I should fancy that though you are such a sober fellow, you must know that a glass of good ale warms the heart—but a glass of brandy better still, if one has got money enough to get it."

"Ah! brandy warms the heart," said Lonsdale, again repeating the other's words with the slow and deliberate air of a man who has just received a hint suggesting a new idea.

"Why, what on earth is the matter with you? You're just tipsy enough to be stupid, without being tipsy enough to be gay."

"Gay! Would liquor make me gay? Then come along, half-a-dozen of you, and I will stand treat at the canteen. Anything," he cried, in the half-maniac pitch of exultation to which despair itself sometimes rises—"anything to get rid of this feeling *here*!"—and with the fingers of his right hand he pointed to the spot under his left arm where the indelible letter had been branded. "It seems to burn like red hot iron!"—he continued, with increasing excitement, while his eyes shot forth sinister fires. "Come along, I say, half a dozen of you—and we will have brandy to drown our cares."

Half wild—with but a dim recollection of his wife and son,—or rather, still more frenziedly



goaded by the images of those beloved ones whose condition had been so much altered by the fiendish persecution of Bates,—Lonsdale hastened to the canteen, closely followed by half a dozen of his comrades, whom he had invited to partake of the treat he proposed to give them. There was a hurry in his brain—a fearful agitation in his heart, that prevented him for a moment from being a free agent. Indeed, such was the condition of the unfortunate man at the time that had he committed a murder, he could not righteously have been held responsible for the deed. He was in such a state of frenzied excitement that he had never known before. His fellow soldiers, however, did not attach so much importance to it as to adopt any measures of coercion or persuasion to tranquillize him. They thought that he had broken out at length—that he was prepared for “a lark”—and they were ready to join heart and soul in it. Had they rightly understood the condition of his mind, their conduct would have been very different; and therefore it was in no ungenerous nor selfish humor on their part that they suffered him to speed to the canteen, and likewise followed him thither.

On arriving there, Frederick tossed down half-a-sovereign—for be it remembered that he and his wife had an ample supply of ready money;—and he called for a bottle of brandy. His comrades were delighted: they fancied he had experienced a windfall somehow or another, and meant to celebrate it by regaling them. The glass of brandy he poured down his throat was the first dram of raw spirits he had ever taken in his life; and no sooner had he swallowed it, than by a strange revulsion of feeling he was seized with the consciousness of having done a wrong deed—and a pang of remorse shot violently through his heart, as if a dagger had suddenly transfixed it. His mood changed all in a moment: the fever heat of an unnatural excitement subsided—and his comrades fancied that he had suddenly become sober. Taking up the change which the keeper of the canteen had to render him out of his half-sovereign, Lonsdale walked forth from the public-house without uttering a word. Those who remained behind, laughingly asked each other what on earth had come over him?—but speedily ceasing to trouble themselves any more on the subject, they drank the remainder of the brandy to his health, though he was absent.

While passing through the streets on the way to the lodging, Frederick Lonsdale recollected the condition in which he had left Lucy in the morning; and his heart was smitten with an indescribable sadness. He felt that the moment he was freed from his duties at the barracks, he ought to have rushed to his wife, to assure himself that she had sustained no relapse and that she was better. Altogether he was deeply dissatisfied with himself; and he inwardly vowed to make the amplest atonement, by the kindness of his demeanor thenceforth, for this first instance of neglect whereof he had been guilty. On reaching the house, he hastened up stairs to the apartment. Lucy was

at work—little Frederick was learning his lesson: but the instant our hero entered the room, the work was laid down—the task-book temporarily abandoned—and he bestowed the usual embrace first upon his wife, then upon his son. Ah! wherefore did Lucy, as she received that caress, suddenly gaze upon her husband with a look of dismay? She smelt his breath: it was laden with the fume of potent liquor.

“Yes, dearest Lucy,” he said, in the spirit of that open-hearted frankness which was really natural to him, “I confess that I did enter the canteen—but only for a moment; and that was a moment of desperation. It shall not occur again. Pray believe me. I know you will not reproach me: but it is your continued confidence that I seek.”

Lucy pressed his hand in silence; for it was a hard struggle on her part to restrain her tears and subdue the emotions that were swelling in her bosom. Throughout the rest of that day our hero was so affectionate in his language and manner, and so strenuously exerted himself to keep off the dark mood, that his wife’s confidence was completely restored; and she hoped that the momentary weakness of which her husband had been guilty, would serve as a warning to maintain him in the right path, and not as the stepping-stone of temptations to lead him into the wrong one.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE HOUSE IN THE DARK ALLEY.

CAPTAIN REDBURN returned to his regiment in an exceeding ill-humour with himself and all the world. The sensuous passion which he had conceived for Adela Clive was mistaken by him for the sincerest and most genuine love; and at all events the feeling was strong enough to render the disappointment most goading and vexatious. Besides, he was cruelly humiliated—profoundly mortified: for it was well known at Oakleigh, and amongst the surrounding nobility and gentry, that he was paying his addresses to the beautiful patrician damsel at the Manor house; and to be so summarily rejected was indeed more than sufficient to aim a blow at his vanity and self-conceit. But this was not all. He had a law-suit pending, for an offence which he had in reality never committed, but which notwithstanding he had every reason to apprehend might be established by circumstantial evidence against him. Had it been some high-born beauty of the patrician sphere whom he was thus charged with seducing from the paths of virtue, his vanity would have been gratified—his self-conceit rendered exultant: he would have considered it a feather in his cap—and he would not have even taken the trouble to defend the action, although the allegation was in itself false. Quite the contrary!—he would have cheerfully allowed his father to pay some few thousands of pounds damages, so long as he might retain the credit of such a brilliant amour. But a bailiff’s wife—and to

have the action brought against him by a mere working-man—there was in all this something excessively humiliating to his pride and which filled his soul with chagrin!

He dreaded, on rejoining his regiment, to become the laughing-stock of his brother-officers when they should hear of what they would term the "low connexion" he had formed on the one hand, and how on the other he had been refused by the beautiful Adela Clive. Indeed, he would not have returned to the regiment at all, were it not that he was heartily glad to escape from the family circle at the Manor House, and from his own native neighborhood. For his father had rated him soundly—his mother was continually deploring the brilliant alliance he had lost—Aunt Jane never omitted an opportunity of indulging in her sly sneers, goading taunts, and bitter sarcasms—Mr. Arden shook his head gloomily—the domestics appeared to titter as they passed him—and some of the villagers, when he strolled into Oakleigh, could not prevent themselves from laughing outright in his face. Under all these circumstances, Captain Redburn was exceedingly glad when the period of leave expired, and he was enabled to rejoin his regiment. But *glad*, as the reader may comprehend, only in one sense—and that was to escape from home: his heart was still full of bitterness towards all mankind.

All news travel fast: and thus, on rejoining his regiment, Captain Redburn found that the circumstances which had recently occurred at Oakleigh were known at head-quarters. Nay, more—the tale, in travelling from the midland county to Manchester, had undergone the usual plastic process of exaggeration and alteration.—In the first place, rumor had declared that Captain Redburn was coolly and scornfully jilted by Lady Adela Clive; and in the second place, the bailiff's wife was reported to be a woman of the lowest and vilest character. On the first day after his return to his regiment, Gerald found himself the object of much covert sarcasm and ironical bantering at the mess-table. He was no favorite with the generality of his brother officers. Some of them did not mind drinking wine at his expense, riding his horses, and borrowing his money: but his excessive vanity—the flippancy of his discourse—the arrogance of his self-conceit—and his ill-conditioned nature altogether, had proved so insufferable as to counterbalance the advantages to be derived from his friendship. Moreover the officers at a mess-table are seldom or never averse to amusing themselves at the expense of one of their body—particularly when they can safely make a butt of him; and Gerald Redburn's reputation for courage did not stand so high as to exempt him from such an ordeal. The consequence was, he found himself the object of a great deal of irony and sarcasm,—jesting and banter; and the natural malignity of his disposition was goaded to a degree that it craved to wreak its vengeance in some quarter where it might safely do so. Matters went on in this way for several weeks; and as Redburn did not think of resenting the treatment he received at the mess-table, the sneers became bolder, the

taunts more direct, the bantering more continuous.

One evening he felt so excessively humiliated, and at the same time so bitterly enraged, that on rising from the table, he went forth into the barrack-yard, determined to pour forth the vials of his spite upon the first victim that he might encounter. Now, it happened that Sergeant-Major Langley who was always fond of tipping, had been taking an extra glass or two at the canteen; and this redoubtable individual was wending his way across the barrack-yard in a condition but little consistent with that rigid military discipline for which he himself was so great a stickler. In plain terms Mr. Langley could with difficulty maintain his equilibrium, and his progress instead of being direct as a line, was as tortuous and meandering as if he were following the curves of an eccentric river. He moreover swayed from side to side—ever and anon staggering, and catching himself up as it were when about to fall,—the while muttering sundry imprecations against his eyes and limbs, and wondering how it was that the entire array of barrack-buildings appeared to be moving round. All on a sudden the cracked weak voice of Captain Redburn fell upon the sergeant's ears; and somewhat sobered by the vague consciousness that he was in the presence of an officer, he steadied his pace—gave the wonted salute—and was passing onward.

"Langley—Sergeant-Major Langley!" ejaculated Redburn: "one word, sirrah!"

The sergeant stood stock still—drew himself up in the first position—repeated the military salute—and by one of those mechanical efforts which only a barrack-made automaton could possibly exert at such a moment and under such circumstances, assumed a look of perfect sobriety.

"Sergeant Langley," exclaimed Gerald, "you have been drinking—you are intoxicated!"

"With all due submission and deference, Captain Redburn," was the answer, delivered in so collected a manner that it astonished Langley himself, "I humbly submit that it cannot be the case. I would rather plead guilty, sir, to the charge at once than contradict an officer whom I consider a model—"

"Well, well," ejaculated Redburn, "I suppose I am mistaken?"—and turning upon his heel, he walked hurriedly away muttering to himself, "I don't think I *am*, though—but after all, Langley is a very good fellow."

The truth is, Gerald's vanity was suddenly flattered by that compliment which the cunning sergeant—cunning even in his cups—had so adroitly paid him: indeed his malignity was for the moment disarmed, at least towards him on whom he was about to vent it. Stopping at the guard-house to light a cigar, Gerald strolled out of the barrack-yard, and commenced lounging through the streets of Manchester.

Meanwhile Mr. Langley, having so astutely and promptly extricated himself from a danger which seemed alike serious and imminent, continued his way to his quarters. The effort which it had cost him to look and speak sober for the swift brief space of a few moments, could not be sustained: a reaction as promptly took



place—and the Sergeant-Major was, if possible, more inebriated than at first. But the sense of that peril which he had just escaped, lingered in his mind, embittering it at the thought of having been thus taken to task by a superior, and impelling him to avenge himself in his turn upon the first person in the shape of an inferior that he might happen to meet. Frederick Lonsdale was at this moment returning to the barracks from his wife's lodging. He had come back half-an-hour earlier than the time prescribed by the "summer regulations," inasmuch as he had to be on guard the following day, and he had his accoutrements to pipe-clay and polish; for being a marked man, he was compelled to exercise the utmost circumspection on this point. He began ascending the stone staircase of that department of the barrack-building just at the time that Sergeant Major Langley was mounting his own quarters. All of a sudden our hero heard a heavy fall on the landing just above—a fall as if a man had tumbled heavily, like an inert helpless mass. Darting up the stairs, Lonsdale immediately recognized the Sergeant-Major, who, though a light was burning there, had stumbled over the uppermost step and had fallen flat down upon the landing.—Frederick at once assisted him to rise; and as for the first few moments Mr. Langley found it somewhat difficult and inconvenient to stand steadily upon his legs, Lonsdale propped him up against the wall. Here was a humiliation for the Sergeant-Major—to be seen in such a plight by the man whom he detested!—and what was still more mortifying, to have received succour from him! He could not possibly express thanks for such assistance: and therefore he at once fell into the opposite extreme.

"Lonsdale," he said, "you have been drinking, sir?"

"No—I have not," responded our hero, curtly and indignantly.

"Don't tell me you have not," ejaculated the Sergeant-Major: "why, you can hardly stand, sir! I see you have been drinking—your face is red—your eyes excited—and there is a horrid smell of liquor under my very nose."

"No doubt of it," rejoined Frederick, unable to repress this cutting remark.

"What do you mean, sirrah?" vociferated Langley, now furious with rage. "Do you intend to insinuate—why, you are as tipsy as you can be! You tumbled flat down!"

"Mr. Langley," interrupted our hero, sternly and resolutely, "if you say but another word, I shall call witnesses who will at once pronounce by the state of our clothing, which of the two it is that has just sprawled upon the dusty landing."

With these words Frederick turned upon his heel, and sped up the second flight to his own quarters.

In the meantime Captain Redburn had sauntered forth, as above stated, into the streets. Lucy and little Frederick had accompanied Lonsdale nearly as far as the barrack-gate. It was not often that they did this, inasmuch as Lucy chose not to be out in the streets of an evening; but on the present occasion she had some work to take home, and she had moreover

some little purchases to make, the necessity for which she had only discovered just as her husband was about to return to the barracks. Captain Redburn was strolling along, smoking his cigar—staring impudently at the women who passed, especially the factory-girls that were leaving the mills—and sometimes stopping to look into those shops that were frequented by females. Presently he beheld a fine-looking woman, neatly but plainly dressed, emerge from a linen-draper's establishment. She was accompanied by a little boy about six years old; and altogether she had a highly respectable as well as modest appearance. Gerald did not immediately catch a glimpse of her countenance; but her fine figure instantaneously struck him; and as she walked along as if in haste to regain her own dwelling, he hurried his footsteps. Overtaking her in a few moments, he turned and stared with cool insolence as he was passing: and now, to his mingled surprise and satisfaction, he at once recognized Mrs. Lonsdale.

He had not seen her since her return to Manchester: indeed he had long ceased to think of her. Years therefore had elapsed since he had last beheld her, which was on that occasion when he so grossly intruded into her lodging at Portsmouth. During this interval she had expanded into the glory of a splendid womanhood; and though her countenance was somewhat pale and wore an expression of softly settled melancholy, she was still eminently beautiful. That pensive look gave an additional interest to her regular and well-sculptured features; and though her apparel was plain and simple, yet it was neatly fashioned, and set off her fine shape to the fullest advantage.

On perceiving that the officer who stared at her so impudently, and who had immediately recognized her, was none other than Captain Redburn, Lucy could not help starting back with a sort of recoil, and the color at once mounted to her cheeks. A most wicked thought at the same instant flashed through the mind of Gerald,—but though perfectly consistent with the light and immoral notions he entertained of female virtue generally. Was she not by this time heartily tired of her soldier-husband? and would she not now prove a comparatively easy conquest? Gerald's passions were fired; and he was altogether in a mood requiring some novel pursuit in order to distract his thoughts from the various unpleasant circumstances pressing upon them.

"Ah, Mrs. Lonsdale!" he exclaimed: "it is a long time since you and I met:"—and as he thus spoke, he stopped short in the midst of the narrow pavement, in such a manner as to bar her way, without however having the appearance of rudeness in the eyes of the passers-by.

Lucy was for the moment alike bewildered and indignant at the cool effrontery with which Captain Redburn addressed her: but speedily recovering her presence of mind, she said in a reserved and dignified manner, "May I request, sir, that you will allow me to proceed?"

"Come, what nonsense is this?" exclaimed Gerald. "Surely you don't bear animosity?"

Lucy, with little Frederick clinging to her

hand, endeavored to pass; and as the street was somewhat thronged at the time, Captain Redburn dared not attempt to molest her. He accordingly stood aside; and she continued her way. But he followed close behind, thinking that perhaps it was only because the boy was with her that she was thus guarded in her conduct: at all events he was determined to ascertain where she lived. Mrs. Lonsdale felt certain that she was thus followed: but she dared not look round, for fear Gerald, whose inordinate vanity and self-conceit she well understood, should fancy it was an encouragement given on her part. Her blood boiled in her veins at the idea of thus being subjected to a renewal of those persecutions and insults which in years past she had experienced at his hands; and blended with her indignation, there was a feeling of bitter grief at an occurrence which seemed to forebode fresh evils. In this state of mind she continued her way; and presently little Frederick, after looking round, said, "Mamma, that gentleman in the red coat is following us."

Lucy quickened her pace; and, dragging her son along in an excited manner, turned abruptly round the first corner, in the hope of escaping from this annoying pursuit. As a matter of course, she was most anxious to prevent Captain Redburn from discovering the place of her abode; and this was her object in so suddenly diverging from the direct path thither. It was a narrow, dark, and unfrequented street—or rather, alley—into which she had thus turned off: but she heard footsteps following close behind—and she had no doubt they were those of Redburn. Still she turned not her head. The alley was threaded; she struck into another, darker and more dismal than the first; and as the footsteps still followed, she caught up little Freddy in her arms, and sped along with the hurry of desperation. The boy was, however, too heavy for her to carry him many minutes; and as her ears no longer caught the sounds of pursuing steps, she paused, completely out of breath.

"What is the matter, dear mamma?" asked the child, as she set him down again; for he was much frightened, though he could not exactly comprehend wherefore his mother had fled thus precipitately.

But before she had time to answer him, the footsteps were again heard rapidly approaching; and, in a few moments, Mrs. Lonsdale and little Freddy were overtaken by Captain Redburn.

"One word, Lucy—just one word," he said; then, in a hurried whisper, he added, "The boy won't tell; I will give him something to buy a toy with."

"Captain Redburn," answered Lucy, for her husband's sake endeavoring to speak rather in a tone of reproachful entreaty than in one of resentful indignation, though this latter was the actual feeling she experienced—"it is not mainly of you thus to persecute an unprotected woman. Indeed, I must appeal for assistance, unless——"

"Where I and to whom?" demanded Gerald, scornfully; for he now saw in a moment that

he had much under-rated her virtue and her firmness. "All is dark and silent here: it is a neighborhood where you might scream in vain."

"Captain Redburn," cried Lucy, now no longer able to curb her resentment—"how dare you address me thus in the presence of this child?"

"Well, well," observed Gerald, fearful that notwithstanding the quietude of the locality, an alarm might be raised; "I will not condescend to talk to you any further. But recollect, Mrs. Lonsdale, that since you treat me in this manner, there is one that I can make smart for it."

With this words he turned upon his heel, and sauntered away—while Lucy, dragging along the affrighted Freddy, hastened on in the contrary direction. It was in a narrow alley running between two immense factories, where this scene occurred. The lights were all extinguished in the mills, and but a feeble glimmering of the moonbeams penetrated down into the little thoroughfare. Captain Redburn was continuing his way, wishing in his heart that he could devise some scheme to get Lucy into his power, when he felt his arm suddenly clutched by a man who emerged from the black shade of an archway close by. Redburn, though by courtesy termed a "gallant officer," was not endowed with any considerable amount of courage; and his first thought was that he was being attacked by a robber. Indeed, an ejaculation of alarm burst from his lips; and instead of drawing his sword, he was about to betake himself to his heels, when the man said, "Don't be afraid, Captain Redburn: I have overheard all, and I can serve you."

"Overheard what?" demanded Gerald, somewhat relieved from his apprehensions; but still having stepped back, he kept at as great a distance as the width of the alley would allow, from the object before him.

"Overheard all that took place betwixt you and Lucy Lonsdale," replied this individual. "I tell you, that I can render you assistance in that quarter."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Redburn: but still half-suspicious, as well as half-incredulous, he demanded, "Who are you? how came you to know me?"

"Never mind all that," responded the stranger. "You have a certain purpose to serve—and I can assist you. You want to achieve a conquest—and I want money. Can a bargain be struck between us?"

Yes—on the condition that I only pay the reward when your portion of the work is done."

"Well, be it so—I can, perhaps, manage to struggle on till then. But we can't talk the matter over here. My lodging—if a lodging it can be called—is close by. Will you come to it?"

Gerald hesitated. It might be some snare into which treachery sought to inveigle him. He looked hard at the man, but could only catch an indistinct view of his countenance. He wore a large-brimmed hat that overshadowed his features: he was roughly and coarsely dressed in the fustian and corduroy of a working man; and yet he did not speak altogether like



one Gerald strained his eyes to obtain a better look at his countenance—and he succeeded; but a shuddering sensation ran through him—for it seemed as if he were gazing upon something as hideous and horrible as a death's head.

"Ah! you are frightened?" said the man, with a bitter laugh. "What! at a poor miserable wretch like me? And *you* with a red coat on, and a sword by your side!"

"Well," ejaculated Redburn, stung by the taunt: "lead the way—and I will follow you."

"It's only a dozen paces distant?"—and the man, passing along the alley, reached a small house, which even in that uncertain light appeared of a most dilapidated and sinister aspect. The idea that this man, whose countenance had made such a hideous impression upon Redburn, should dwell in such a cut-throat ghost-haunted looking place as that, conjured up fresh terrors—vague, shuddering, and undefined—in Gerald's imagination; and when the stranger drew forth a latch-key, and opened the door, and all appeared dark and silent as the tomb within, this gallant officer, though having a sword by his side, hesitated to follow.

"You had better draw that weapon of yours," said the man; "and if you observe anything to indicate treachery, you can cut me down at once. I tell you that if you will trust me, Lucy Lonsdale shall be yours; but if you don't like to come in here and talk the matter over, lead the way to some secluded spot, and I will follow."

"Go on," said Redburn, again goaded into an artificial courage by the doubt thrown upon his valor; nevertheless, as he entered that dark and silent habitation, he laid his hand upon his sword, ready to draw it forth in case of need.

The man shut the door; and they were now alone together in the pitchy blackness of the passage. A thousand horrible thoughts flashed through Redburn's mind. Was the fellow about to deal at his throat? would he deal him a treacherous blow with a dagger? would a posse of ambushed murderers suddenly burst forth and seize upon him? would a trap-door give way all in a moment beneath his feet? He trembled from head to foot, bitterly repenting that he had entered the house.

"Stop an instant," said the man, "while I get a light;"—and opening a side-door, he entered somewhere. In a few moments a light glimmered through the opening; and Redburn passed into the room which the stranger had thus previously entered. The latter was standing with his back towards him at the instant, in the act of lighting a candle, which was stuck in a blacking bottle, that stood on the small projecting fragment of a mouldered wooden mantel-piece. The glance that Gerald flung around, showed him that he was in a place which but too well accounted for the meaning of the stranger's words, when he so bitterly said, "if a lodging it can be called." There were shutters fastened outside the window; but scarcely a particle of the window itself remained—not a morsel of glass, and the sashes as well as the framework all broken and fallen away. The air-holes of the shutters were stuffed through with what appeared to be black and rotting

rag. The ceiling was of sooty obscurity—the floor equally black with collected dirt. The door, with clefts in the panels, hung crazily to one hinge. The walls were for the most part as black as the ceiling and floor—but in some places green with the damp mildew, and as dilapidated as if the place had been left to fall into ruin through a long series of years. Furniture there was none, properly so speaking, in this miserable den. A saucepan on the grate—a broken mug by the side of the blacking bottle on the mantel—a few coals and bundles of wood thrown down in one corner—and what appeared to be a heap of rags, with a dirty tattered blanket, spread in the shape of a bed in another corner,—these were the only articles that afforded a sign that it was a human habitation: for there was neither table nor chair in the place.

It required but a glance to embrace the entire wretchedness of the room; and having thrown that glance around, Redburn's eyes once more settled on the man, who had just finished lighting the candle. Throwing the match into the grate, he slowly turned round towards Gerald, who literally recoiled in horror from the countenance which was thus more distinctly revealed to him than in the dark alley outside. Heavens, what a countenance! It was of a deep livid hue, marked with immense seams, as if it had been shockingly burnt in a fire, or had been seared with a red-hot iron. One eye was extinguished—that is to say, the sight was evidently gone, and the orb looked of a dull leaden hue like that of a fish that has been a long time out of the water. The other possessed the power of vision, but was all in flamed and red—the lashes were burnt off—and it seemed as if the pupil were set in a mass of congealed gore. A part of the nose appeared to be eaten away: the lips were swollen and puffed out to three times their natural size, looking larger than the mouth of any negro; and their hue was that of the slips of liver that are exposed for sale in cat's meat shops. As before stated, this horrible object was clothed in the coarsest and most poverty-stricken manner; and his entire appearance was too disgusting—too loathsome—even to inspire pity.

Slowly did he remove his hat, thus displaying a crop of dark hair that had been cut close; and the scarlet seams of searing or burning, whatever it were that had injured him, actually extended up above his forehead on to the crown of his head, leaving large spaces where the hair did not grow at all. In short, it would be impossible to conceive anything in the shape of a human being more closely bordering upon hideous monstrosity than this wretch.

As he took off his hat, he bent his one eye searchingly upon Gerald Redburn; and then his horrible countenance relaxed, or expanded, or changed—we scarcely know which term to use—into a sort of smile, as he said, "Well, you don't know me then?"

"Know you, good God!" ejaculated Redburn, utterly unable to conceal the loathing, horror, and intense disgust which he felt at the contemplation of this awful object. "I never saw you in my life before."

"Well, all right—I am glad you say so," replied the man, "You see I can't ask you to sit down, because there is no accommodation. The only use in having brought you here is that we can talk matters quietly over."

"But who are you? how came you to know me? how came you to know Lucy Lonsdale? and why were you listening to us at the time?"

"The last question had best be answered first," responded the object. "It won't be difficult for you to understand why I don't show myself much out of doors in the day time: so what little purchases I have to make—and they are not many—I generally do after dark. That's the reason I was out at the time, and coming along the alley, when I heard you two talking. This house, you see, is in Chancery," continued the man: "it looks like a Chancery house, doesn't it? It's an emblem of one of those blessed institutions of our's that statesmen, and lords, and wealthy folks are always crying up to the skies. But no matter: it's a lucky thing for me that there is such a thing as the Chancery Court—or else this house wouldn't have tumbled into ruins, and I shouldn't have known where to lay my head. It's better to sleep even within these four walls, and on those rags, than on a dung-hill in the open air. Well, one night—when I first came to Manchester—as I was crawling along this alley, sinking with fatigue, and thinking whether I had not better go and pitch myself into the Irwell, or dash out my brains against a wall,—I saw one of these shutters blowing open with the wind. So I crept into the room, laid down on the floor, and slept till morning. Then I ventured out to beg: for I was starving. Some ladies and gentlemen passed by and turned away from me in horror: but some poor factory slaves,—men and women,—yes, and young girls too, amongst them,—took compassion on me, clubbed together a dozen shillings, and so saved me from dying in the street. Then I took possession of this place. I found an old latch key amongst a heap of rags and rubbish; and it seemed as if by the possession of that key, I had got a hold on the house itself. Now you know as much as I consider it necessary to tell you of my circumstances."

"But who are you?" again inquired Redburn: "and how came you to be injured in that dreadful manner? Above all, how came you to know me and Lucy Lonsdale? and what do you mean by saying that you can serve me in respect to her?"

"First and foremost you ask me who I am," responded the spectre. "I take it for granted we shall have to meet again; and it will be convenient that you should know me by some name. You can call me Smith. It's as good a name as any other; and it comprises perhaps the largest family in the whole country. As to the hurts I have received, they were done by burning—a house catching on fire, or something of that sort. Next, as to how I knew you and Mrs. Lonsdale, it does not exactly matter. Perhaps I am a great inquirer, though I do only creep out, as a general rule, after dark. Besides," added the man, as if catching at an idea, "you and Mrs. Lonsdale addressed each other

by name while talking together. Lastly, how I propose to serve you—that is altogether another thing."

"And after all, it is the main thing," observed Redburn, somewhat anxious to be gone from the wretched den where he found himself, and the hideous presence in which he stood.

"Leave it to me to manage," rejoined the individual, who, it appeared, chose to be known by the not very uncommon name of Smith. "If you receive a letter at your quarters, stating that on a particular day and at a certain hour, Mrs. Lonsdale may be found at some house the occupants of which are not over particular as to what takes place beneath their roof——"

"I understand you," interjected Redburn. "I know what sort of house you mean. But is it possible——"

"Leave it to me, I say," exclaimed Smith. "If you receive such a letter, I ask, telling you that Lucy Lonsdale is there, I suppose you won't hesitate to fly to the appointment?"

"Not I!" exclaimed Redburn: "and your reward shall be a liberal one. In the meantime, although at first I did not intend to give you anything in advance, here are five sovereigns as an earnest of my good intentions."

"I shall take the money," responded the man, "because there will be fees to pay the people of the house before they will enter into the plot."

Thus speaking, he extended his hand to receive the gold which Captain Redburn had just taken from his purse; and again did the latter recoil with an irresistible sensation of loathing and horror—for the hand which the miserable being thus stretched forth was seamed, and seared in as frightful a manner as his countenance.

"Now then I shall take my departure," said the Captain: but as he issued forth from the room, it was with a lingering misgiving that some treachery might be yet intended. However, the human monster, who called himself Smith, appeared to have no such purpose in view; and Gerald Redburn passed out of the dilapidated building in perfect safety. He felt that he breathed far more freely when once again in the open air; and having threaded the alley, he emerged into the well-lighted and bustling street with a feeling of self-congratulation that he had passed unhurt through an adventure of a most singular and suspicious character.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE GUARD-ROOM.

THE next day Frederick Lonsdale was on guard. On these occasions he was unable to pay a visit to the lodging; and therefore he remained in ignorance of the insults to which his wife had been subjected on the preceding evening.

Sergeant Major Langley had awakened on the morning of the particular day of which we



are now speaking, with a racking head-ache, but with the full recollection of what had passed between himself and Lonsdale on the staircase. At first he was afraid lest our hero, out of revenge for past occurrences, should report him to the Colonel—in which case witnesses might be brought forward, including Captain Redburn himself, to prove that the charge was correct, and that he was really much intoxicated. But Lonsdale, although he would have gladly taken any step to avenge himself upon Langley, thought on his own side that it would be useless to report this instance of the Sergeant-Major's misconduct. He did not know that Redburn had seen him in that state: nor was he aware that other witnesses could be found to substantiate the charge. Moreover, feeling himself to be a marked man in the regiment, Lonsdale entertained the humiliating belief that nothing he might advance against a superior would be listened to with attention. For these motives therefore—and through no good feeling towards Langley—he held his peace. When the parade was over, and the Sergeant-Major found that no notice was taken of his delinquency, he saw that Lonsdale could not have mentioned the circumstance; and he was shrewd enough, on calmer consideration, to penetrate our hero's reasons.

"He would have blabbed if he thought he should be believed," said Langley to himself; "and therefore I owe him nothing for his silence."

On the contrary, the Sergeant-Major felt that he owed Lonsdale a new grudge for having become the witness of his inebriate condition. His spite was resuscitated with fresh rancor against the unfortunate private soldier. Though Frederick's accountments were in the best possible order, Langley found fault, and seized an opportunity to curse and swear at him most virulently, as an idle, slovenly, dirty, good-for-nothing fellow. Our hero grew pale as death—bit his lip almost till the blood came—and felt that it was only with an almost superhuman exertion that he could prevent himself from knocking the Sergeant-Major down. Langley comprehended full well what was passing in his mind; and feeling himself to be quite safe in the exercise of his petty tyranny, continued to fling out the most cutting taunts, coupled with the grossest abuse, at poor Lonsdale. Throughout that day he visited the guard-room several times, and on each occasion had some fault to find with our hero: while, as if to render his vituperations all the more galling, he travelled out of his way to bestow the most extravagant praise upon the other soldiers on duty. Frederick felt that a devil was being excited within him—that if this were the commencement of a new epoch of petty tyranny, overt and direct, he could not endure it—that his patience would give way—and that in a moment of frenzy he should be driven to do something desperate. He was in a state of what may be termed subdued excitement; it was the slumbering of a volcano. He almost loathed himself as an unmanly coward for enduring so much without resenting it, no matter what the consequence might be.

In the evening, when those soldiers of the guard who were not on sentry at the time, were sitting together engaged in conversation, the boy from the canteen came in for orders. A subscription was quickly entered into according to the means of the subscribers, for a supply of beer. It happened that their funds were on this occasion all excessively short; and the quantity of liquor to be furnished would be proportionately small. Lonsdale sat apart in moody silence, not even observing what was going on. He was brooding upon his wrongs past and present—and with sombre apprehension looking forward to those that appeared to be looming in the future.

"Come, Lonsdale," said one of his comrades, "we are precious short here: won't you contribute for once in a way?"

"You know he never does," said another, who was a good, well-disposed man; "and therefore why put him to the pain of refusal? We all like Lonsdale, and are perfectly content to let him have his own way."

"But I say though," interposed a third, "don't you recollect that a few weeks ago Lonsdale treated us to brandy at the canteen?"

"What is that you are talking about?" inquired our hero, suddenly starting up from his seat and advancing towards the group: "you want money to make up your subscription? Well I feel in a humor to drink something this evening. Here—let it be strong ale—the strongest you have got."—and he tossed a five-shilling piece to the pot-boy.

In a few minutes the ale was brought; and good strong liquor it was too—the primest old ale that was drawn at the canteen, one pint of which was sufficient to get into the head of any man not accustomed to drink, and a pot of which would make even the strongest head feel dizzy. True it is—and alas! that we should be compelled to confess it—that at the moment when he received the first glass, Lonsdale fancied that the images of Lucy and his beloved little boy rose up before him with mournfully entreating looks: but the warning was disregarded. He felt so completely miserable—so broken in mind—so crushed in spirit—so completely weighed down by a deep despondency, that he could not possibly resist the temptation or the opportunity of imbibing an artificial stimulant. It was in a sort of desperation that he did so: it was in one of those moods when a man feels inclined to sell his soul to Satan in order to purchase exemption from present sufferings and the sense of wrongs. He knew that he was taking a false step—he remembered the vow he pledged Lucy on the occasion when he drank the brandy—his conscience told him he was entering on a dangerous path: but on the other hand, he felt the absolute necessity of raising himself up from that abyss of despondency into which he had been plunged.

The first glass of ale which he thus took on the occasion whereof we are speaking, diffused a glow through his entire frame: he felt his heart lighter but still his spirits were not sufficiently raised above that point at which they felt uncomfortable. He accepted another

glass when the ale was passed round a second time; and then his heart appeared to be bounding within him. He began to reflect that he had been a fool to suffer himself to be spirit-crushed by the abuse of Sergeant Langley: he ought to have treated it with indifference—to have let the ruffian bully go on as he liked without taking any notice of him; it was perfectly ridiculous to make himself miserable for such trifles! After all, there was more comfort in a good glass of ale than he had imagined; and if it cheered his spirits, why should he not take it? Lucy was no doubt an excellent woman—he loved her dearly—and he always would love her: but it would be going a little too far for her to object to his drinking a social glass with his comrades, especially when it did him good. Besides, he was not to remain attached to his wife's apron-strings. It was all very well in the honeymoon of their youthful love; but by this time the fervour of that heart-worship, reciprocally felt, ought to have mellowed down into a more sober and rational feeling. And then too, how was she to know that he took his glass? If she objected to it, he need not tell her: there was no use in making her unhappy. So he could keep her in the dark on the subject, and yet indulge himself in a little innocent recreation all the same. But moderation—only moderation!—he felt convinced he never could be a drunkard! It was not in the moderate use of the good things of this world that any evil lay—but in the abuse thereof; and he was quite sure of being enabled to adhere to moderation and avoid plunging into excess.

Such was the reasoning with which Frederick Lonsdale endeavored to quiet the qualms of conscience as he accepted the *third* glass of strong ale which was passed round; and yet all that time he was endeavoring to cheat his own good sense and delude his intellect with this wretched strain of sophistry, he felt the effects of the *second* glass working in his brain; and though while thinking of moderation, and pluming himself so confidently upon his fortitude to avoid excess, he was already by taking that third glass overstepping the boundary which separated the one from the other. The ground of moderation itself is a dangerous one for even the strongest-minded man to tread upon, when once he begins to feel that it is necessary to satisfy his own scruples by means of argument. All drunkards have first of all been moderate drinkers; and when moderate drinkers, they were as satisfied as our hero Lonsdale, that they could never by any accident or chance fall into an extreme. It is this overweening confidence in one's self that proves the ruin of millions. The Enemy of Mankind never laid a more successful snare in the pathway of the human race, than this arrogant self-sufficiency which makes the presumptuous mortal boast that he is standing in security upon a rock at the very moment when his feet are slipping over the edge of a precipice.

But to return to our narrative. The third glass of ale was drunk; and now Lonsdale experienced a greater degree of exhilaration from the effects of strong liquor than he had ever

felt in his life before. He was not exactly tipsy; but he was not sober. He knew perfectly well what he was about, and had a complete command over his words and actions: he was even sufficiently prudent to refuse the fourth glass of ale when the can went round again, notwithstanding his mouth watered to imbibe it. But there was a devil-me-care sort of recklessness about him, as if he had taken a resolve not to allow the troubles of the world to affect him any more, but to meet them with a supercilious indifference, to sustain which an artificial stimulant might be derived from a glass of good liquor.

Soon after ten o'clock Sergeant Langley and Captain Redburn entered the guard-house. Gerald had been ordered by the Colonel to make the round of the barracks with the Sergeant Major for some particular reason which we need not here specify: and hence this visit. The soldiers all immediately stood up in a respectful manner: but the cans and glasses had not been so successfully put out of sight as to be unobserved by Redburn and Langley.

"Hallo, my men!" said Gerald, who having been bantered as usual at the mess-table, was in an execrable humor: "you seem to have been having a regular orgie here? I don't mind a glass of beer a-piece; no one would object to that; but by the size and number of those tin cans you must have had six times that quantity."

Now, be it observed that Captain Redburn himself had only imbibed that evening one hot-tle of sherry, a pint of port, and a bottle of claret—to say nothing of three or four glasses of soda-water and brandy during the day, and some bottled ale at lunch. He did not stand with exceeding steadiness on his legs; there was a certain thickness as well as hiccuping hesitation in his speech; and as he was leaving the mess-table new roars of laughter had burst forth when Lieutenant Paget had whispered loud enough for every one to hear, "that Redburn was more than half-seas over." But what an officer may do with wine, a private soldier must not think of doing with beer; that is, to say, drink too much. An officer may get drunk every evening of his life, and ten to one he will be set down by his comrades as a capital, jovial-hearted fellow,—save and except in such a case as Redburn's where there are grounds for personal dislike; but even in this instance, the inebriety of the individual will only serve to make him a laughing-stock, or furnish another arrow for the bow of sarcasm. How different is it with the private soldier! If he only becomes the least thing inebriated, instead of being set down as a capital, jovial-hearted fellow, he is at once denounced as a drunken dog and a good-for-nothing scoundrel.

To resume our story. When Captain Redburn, standing unsteadily and with a tipsy hiccup, remonstrated with the soldiers on the quantity of ale which they had evidently drunk, they all endeavored to look as demure and sober as they possibly could. Indeed, none of them were much the worse for what they had taken, in the common acceptance of the term—unless it were Lonsdale, whose flushed counte-



nance and flashing eyes denoted an unusual degree of excitement.

"Come, Sergeant Major," said Gerald, endeavoring to look exceedingly stern—and we have already remarked that he was in a particularly bad humor,—“are any of these men tipsy? Examine them well—Hah! Private! What's your name—Lonsdale, isn't it?—just as if Gerald did not know the name as well as his own:—“I think *you* have a drop too much. Do *not* be look terribly excited, Langley?”

“Terrible, sir,” responded the Sergeant-Major, who, being on this occasion quite sober himself, was enabled to draw his form pompously up to its full height and assume a deprecating tone of voice.

“Stand forward, you fellow,” said Gerald, thus addressing Lonsdale, with much greater brutality than he would have used in speaking to one of the dogs at his father's man-ion. “Now, then—be quick about it,” he added, inasmuch as our hero, with the hot blood boiling furiously in his veins, for a moment felt inclined to resent the manner in which he was thus treated. “There now—take the candle, Langley—hold it before his face, and let me have a good look at him. What do you think, Langley? isn't he tipsy?”

“Quite, sir,” responded the sergeant.

“I deny it!” ejaculated Frederick, flinging the negative with an indignant fierceness at the Sergeant-Major.

“Hold your tongue, fellow!” cried Redburn. “No insubordination here! You have been drinking ale——”

“I have, sir—I confess it,” answered Frederick: “but I deny that I am inebriated.”

“Inebriated. None of your fine words here,” rejoined Gerald contemptuously. “What business has a beggar like you to study the dictionary?”

“Beggar!” echoed Lonsdale, a galvanic thrill of rage sweeping through his entire form.

“What, sir! do you mean to give me any of your insolence?” exclaimed Gerald, but stepping back two or three paces at the same moment, for fear lest the outraged private soldier should dash him to the ground.

“I meant no insolence, Captain Redburn,” answered Lonsdale, now mastering his emotions, although with considerable difficulty. “I am accused of being drunk—since you do not like the other term——”

“This is fresh insolence,” interrupted Redburn: then all in a moment it flashed to his mind that the plot of the man Smith might be considerably aided if Lonsdale were kept out of the way from his wife's lodgings for a few days; and here was an opportunity of accomplishing this particular object. “Yes: I repeat—you have been guilty of the greatest insolence, not only to the Sergeant-Major, but also to myself. Consider yourself under arrest; and it depends upon how you behave yourself for the next three or four days, whether I don't have you brought to a court-martial. He has been punished before, I think—hasn't he, Langley?”—and Gerald put the question with a contemptuous manner of indifference, as if he did not trouble himself to recollect such circumstances.

“Yes, sir—flogged,” replied Langley.

“Oh, flogged—eh?”

“Yes, sir—flogged *twice*:—and the Sergeant-Major accentuated the word with bitter spitefulness.

“Twice—eh?”

“Yes, sir—and branded too.”

“Oh the incorrigible scoundrel!” ejaculated Redburn. “Well, he is to consider himself under arrest:—and thus speaking, he turned away and quitted the guard-house, followed by Sergeant Langley, who, ere he crossed the threshold, threw back a look of demoniac malignity and fiendish triumph upon the unfortunate Lonsdale. A low moan had come forth from his lips at these words which so cruelly and terribly reminded him that he was a branded deserter,—reminded, too, with such unfeeling barbarity in the presence of his comrades! A dead silence prevailed in the guard-room for some minutes after Captain Redburn and the Sergeant-Major had taken their departure. Lonsdale, with folded arms, paced to and fro—his fine form drawn up to its full height—his shoulders thrown back—thus, unpremeditatedly on his part displaying the graceful curve at the waist in its symmetrical proportions: but his head was bent forward, and his looks were cast down in moody thoughtfulness. He felt himself cruelly outraged—brutally treated. Was he a dog to be thus kicked by a wretch like Gerald Redburn? was he a reptile to be thus trampled upon by the foot of a bully like Sergeant Langley? Despair was writhing about his heart: he felt that if he were to give way to his passion, he could start off from that guard-house like a maniac, and with his bayonet immolate both his enemies to the vengeance that was burning within him.

“It's a deuced deal too bad,” observed one of the soldiers, at length breaking the long interval of silence which had prevailed: and as he spoke in a somewhat subdued tone, he looked towards the door to assure himself that there were no eavesdroppers.

“Yes—too bad,” said another. “Lonsdale didn't deserve it. For what he has done before, he suffered, and oughtn't to have it thrown in his teeth.”

“And by such a whipper-snapper as that Redburn!” interjected a third.

“And that great hulking bully Langley,” remarked a fourth.

“Well, we are all liable to it,” said a fifth—an elderly man with a thoughtful countenance. “I tell you what it is, comrades—there will never be any justice in the army, till the officers rise from the ranks, as the non-commissioned officers do.”

“What nonsense!” cried another soldier. “The non-commissioned officers are as great bullies as they can well be; and the officers would be the same, just as they are now, if they also rose from the ranks.”

“Softly, softly, my good fellow,” responded the elderly soldier. “You know very well that I have reflected on these matters. What I say is this—if it is necessary to have an army at all, it is for the general good, as a safeguard for the whole country. It oughtn't to be a set of

mechanized and embroiled slaves: it ought to be composed of freemen, as much brothers of the civilians as civilians amongst themselves ought to be brothers. Well then, let every regiment elect its own officers—commissioned and non-commissioned—Ah! and have these elections, too, periodically, so that we should be sure not only of having good officers, but should likewise hold a check upon their conduct. But then, we should be told that there would be no discipline? What nonsense! there would be better discipline where all the links and ties that bound us to each other would be of a human and Christian character. In France the National Guards elect their officers every year—or two years, I forget which; and there's as good discipline amongst them as there is in the regular army. In the United States, too, the militia elect their own officers; and the American militia is just as good as any regular army in the world. Now, these are facts that I know: so there is no nonsense about them. I have got a brother in Paris—he is naturalized, as they call it there, and obliged to serve in the National Guard: so he has wrote and told me all about it. Then I have an uncle in the United States; and he also has let me know how the thing works there. Ah! America is the country for true freedom. With all our talk, and bluster, and braggadocio, we are only a set of slaves in comparison with the people of the great American Union. And as for flogging—why, the British army is almost the only one in the world where it exists now. So I suppose we English soldiers are considered a set of brutes and barbarians, that can't be kept in order without the lash!"

The conversation in the guard-room was continued in this strain for some time longer: but it is not our purpose to chronicle any more of the discourse thus held. Throughout that night Lonsdale's perturbed spirit grew into a more morbid condition: the sense of his wrongs acquired a keener edge; the thirst for vengeance against those whom he regarded as his sworn enemies became stronger, and craved the more deeply to be quenched.

Early in the morning he penned a hasty note to Lucy, to tell her that he was under arrest, and should be unable to visit the lodging, not merely for that day, but probably for several days to come. He begged of her not to call upon him at the barracks, as he was so fearful that she might be subjected to insult at the hands of that individual whom he bitterly denounced as "an incarnate fiend"—thereby meaning Gerald Redburn. Frederick did not enter into any details relative to the cause of the punishment which he was enduring: he had too much remorse for his own conduct, to confess to Lucy that he had been drinking; and he had still too high a sense of honor to deny the circumstance with a bold effrontery. She herself, full well understanding even the minutest trait in her husband's disposition, at once saw by the manner in which the note was worded, that there was something wrong. She could not possibly endure the suspense into which it threw her; and yet she hesitated to disobey the injunction he gave, that she should abstain from

visiting him at the barracks. She was thus bewildered how to act—till at length she felt it to be her duty to go and ascertain how matters actually stood: for she even feared that they might be worse than her husband had chosen to represent. She put into a basket some articles of food to administer to his comfort: but there-with no intoxicating liquors found a place—and taking little Frederick with her—for the companionship of a child, no matter how tender its age, is ever held as a kind of safeguard by a respectable woman—she bent her way to the barracks. On arriving there, she obtained access to her husband; and he could not hide a feeling of annoyance at her presence. This was because he knew that he should have to tell her the whole truth, which he did not like to do. She wept at his manner when he received her: for she could not repel the thought that some time back he would have regarded her visit as a proof of her devoted affection. He understood what was passing in her mind; and stricken by remorse, did his best to atone for that apparent demonstration of ill-humor.

"The fact is," he said, mustering up all his courage to speak with frankness, "I felt so dull and miserable, I took a glass or two of ale. My dear wife, pray don't look so forlorn and disconsolate all of a sudden: I really could not help it. You don't know what I suffer at times, or you would pity me?"—and his countenance was convulsed with a writhing expression of anguish.

"Pity you, dearest Frederick?" responded the weeping Lucy. "Oh! you know that I more than pity you—I enter into all you feel—I identify myself with all your sufferings—because I love you—heaven alone can tell how much I love you! I will not reproach you for having taken that liquor, Frederick: but surely, surely your own natural strength of mind does not need such artificial stimulant to sustain it?"

"Lucy," he responded, with a sudden paroxysm of violence, "there are moments when I feel as if I should go mad. That villain levelled the most diabolical abuse at me; he called me *beggar*! Just heavens, how did I master my feelings? And yet I did—for your sake, and that of our dear boy there. I was not tipsy: perhaps I was a little excited—I admit that I was; but more by the state of my feelings than by the liquor I had drunk. At all events, my appearance was not more inebriated than that of my comrades on guard: but I was singled out for punishment—I alone have to endure that reptile's vengeance. Ah! think you that it is not enough to drive one wild? And now I will tell you something that I have not mentioned to you before, but which will prove to you that this miscreant Redburn is the enemy of every one belonging to you or me. When at home some weeks back, he seduced your mother in law——"

"Oh! my poor father," murmured Lucy with a deep groan: "what will he do? what will become of him?"

"Yes—it is a fact that Redburn did this," replied Lonsdale, accentuating the words: "it is the talk of the whole barrack—and he is jeered for it at the mess-table. Your father has thrown









up his situation as Sir Archibald's steward, and has brought an action against Captain Redburn. Don't think, dear Lucy, that I tell you all this to give you pain: it is only to show what a diabolical villain that man is, and how embittered my soul must be against him."

Lonsdale could not help feeling, even while thus speaking, that he was acting an unkind and hypocritical part: for it was merely to avert from himself his wife's regrets and reproachful looks on account of his taking too much liquor, that he had endeavored to turn all her attention upon the conduct of Captain Redburn. Indeed, he sought to make himself appear altogether a victim in his wife's regards, though the conduct of that officer in respect to Kitty had really nothing to do with the circumstance of the ale-drinking of the preceding evening.

It was in the barrack-room where this interview took place; and no one besides themselves and little Frederick was present. Nevertheless, Lucy, instead of giving free and unrestrained vent to her grief, subdued it as much as possible, for fear of adding to her husband's afflictions. Lonsdale understood all this; and his heart smote him for behaving with even the slightest degree of hypocrisy towards that admirable woman and for his unkindness in mentioning a circumstance which he could so well have kept from her knowledge, and had hitherto done so.

"Promise me, dear Frederick—Oh! do promise me," she said, "that you will exert all your courage to meet your lot with resignation; and do not—do not, I conjure you—have recourse to any thing that may in a moment wreck all the hopes which remain to us in this life! For we are not without hope, Frederick. We are yet young—and when your time shall have expired, we may settle again comfortably in the world. Then what happiness—Oh, what happiness we may enjoy!"

"Yes, dear Lucy—we are not without hope," rejoined Frederick: but as he gave utterance to these words, his soul was smitten with the darkest presentiments of impending evil and of consequent despair. "Do not be afraid—I will not commit any imprudence again. Ah! you look up so appealingly in my countenance, it seems as if you trembled lest I was promising something which I shall not perform! Yet you must once more give me your confidence—and I will not deceive you."

"I will, I will, my dearest husband," she replied, scarcely able to subdue her sobs: for she could not help remembering that he had made this pledge before, and that he had broken it.—Then, in order to change the conversation quickly, she said, forcing herself to smile as she opened her basket, "Look, I have brought you a few little things to make you as comfortable as I can; and during the two or three days that you will be absent, I promise that our dear little Frederick shall not neglect his lessons. How long do you think it will be before you are released from arrest?"

"Only the two or three days you have mentioned," returned Lonsdale, deeply moved by the delicate attentions which his wife showed him: "and then, dear Lucy we will endeavor

to be happy with each other again. But *pray* don't risk insult by coming to this place."

"I will not, Frederick," she answered, inwardly sorrowing that he should have given her this hint; because she was prepared to encounter anything rather than desert or neglect her husband in his tribulation. "But tell me that you are not angry with me for coming this once?"

"Angry? No, dearest—that is not the term!" ejaculated Lonsdale. "I am only fearful that you should suffer insolent conduct at the hands of some of the unprincipled fellows who bear the rank of officer."

Little Frederick had been wandering about the barrack-room in a manner natural to his age, while this colloquy took place between his parents; and he had not noticed the depth of feeling which they had displayed. Lonsdale now called his little boy to him, and chatted with him for a few minutes. He then embraced them both affectionately, and they took their departure.

Lucy accompanied by little Frederick, effected her egress from the barrack-yard without being noticed by any one in particular; and she regained her lodging, which now looked gloomy enough as she reflected that for two or three days it might not be cheered by the presence of her husband. Her spirits were most desponding. She could not help perceiving, in many details of this interview with Frederick, additional evidences of the change that was taking place within him. She felt that it was a shocking thing for a wife to have her confidence shaken in a husband whom she adored: but she could not blind her eyes to the fact that his manner had not been altogether so frank and candid, nor so affectionate, as it was wont—but that there had been something constrained in his bearing throughout—something forced in the way in which he had sought to divert her attention from his own little backsliding, in order to rivet all the power of her feelings upon Gerald Redburn's conduct. Nor could she banish from her mind that transient ill-humor he had shown when she first made her appearance before him. She trembled lest circumstances should again drive him to drink, and that the habit might grow upon him: she feared also that in the gradual warping of his naturally noble heart, his love for herself might be impaired, and that while his disposition was being soured against all the world, no exception might be made even for his wife and child.

Such were the painful thoughts that forced themselves on Lucy's mind; and vainly did she endeavor to put them away from her, as if they belonged to the reminiscences of a hideous dream. But she could not: they grew upon her—they were fraught with a veritable mental anguish which she could not control; and they gave rise to the darkest though vaguest forebodings. Thus passed the remainder of that day; and ineffectually did poor Lucy endeavor to settle herself to her work. At short intervals she found it dropping from her hand, and her mind falling into a fresh train of gloomiest meditation.

It was about half-past nine in the evening—

little Frederick lay in bed, locked in the slumber of innocence—when a gentle tap was heard at Lucy's door; and she, thinking it to be the landlady, bade the person enter. But instead of the woman of the house, it was an elderly female, decently dressed, and of somewhat matronly appearance. She had a red face, the rubicund color of which, a close observer would have at once discerned to arise from drinking: but Lucy was too generous in the construction she had put upon outward appearances, to form any such conclusion; while, at the same time, her mind was in too confused a state to allow her to take very particular notice of the personal characteristics of her visitress. A single candle was burning upon the table; and by the light thereof the afflicted wife had been endeavoring to make up for what she considered to be the neglect of her work during the day. The woman who now made her appearance, glanced quickly around; and, perceiving that the boy was fast asleep in the bed, an air of satisfaction at once took possession of her features: but even this, Lucy failed to observe.

"I believe," said the female, "that I am speaking to Mrs. Lonsdale, the daughter of Mr. Davis, who until recently was in the employment of Sir Archibald Redburn?"

"My poor father!" ejaculated Lucy; "what of him? Has he at length consented to forgive his daughter? does he now need the solace and comfort which I may be enabled to bestow upon him?"

"He needs more!" responded the woman; "he requires your presence by the side of that sick bed on which care and trouble have stretched him."

"Oh! he shall not ask in vain!" cried the warm-hearted Mrs. Lonsdale. "Where is he? Tell me, my good woman—keep me not in suspense;" for she experienced a fond and anxious yearning towards that father whom she had not seen for some years; and all the past, so far as his cruelty towards her had been concerned, was obliterated in a moment.

"He is here—in this town," answered the woman. "He came to Manchester to see you, that you might forgive him for everything——"

"Oh! speak not to me thus!" interrupted Lucy, vehemently. "It is not for a child to forgive a parent. Where is he?—where is he?"

"He took lodgings at my house," returned the woman—"not being able to find you out immediately. He was ill when he came: he has grown worse. At length I have discovered your abode—and I have come to conduct you to him."

"I will go immediately," rejoined Lucy, full of anxiety and suspense, and totally unsuspecting of any treacherous aim on the part of this woman, whose speech and manner were more than friendly—they were motherly.

To put on her bonnet and shawl, was but the work of a moment; and this being done, Lucy followed the female from the room. Stopping on the ground floor to request the landlady to go up and sit in the chamber during her temporary absence, Lucy accompanied the guide out of the house; and as they hurried along through the streets, the feeling that still continued uppermost in the mind of our heroine was totally apart from misgiving and suspicion: it was the absorbing one of anxiety and suspense in respect to her father.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

## THE SNARE.

AFTER Lucy and little Freddy had taken their departure from the barrack-room, Lonsdale was left to the solitary companionship of his own thoughts. These were by no means of a pleasurable nature. He remembered that he had received his wife with a manifestation of petulance; and his heart was stricken with remorse. He remembered, too, that he had plunged a dagger into her heart by revealing to her the circumstance connected with Redburn and her father; and he bitterly repented the unkindness of that proceeding. He was altogether dissatisfied with himself—discontented with all the world—soured against all mankind, the two dear ones alone excepted. But then the demon again whispered in his ear; and, endeavouring to find a justification for himself, he reasoned in the following manner:—

"Why should I thus behave like a mere child in my wife's presence? Why should I be afraid to let her know that I took a glass or two of ale? It is like being an unmanly coward. I won't humble myself in this way in future; I will assume a higher stand. But at the same time, poor Lucy is so affectionate—and that dear little boy has such winning ways—Oh, my God! that we should ever have seen our comfortable home in Calais broken up! What happiness did we enjoy there! It is enough to drive me mad to think of the past!"

And Lonsdale clenched his fists—for he felt a demoniac fury raging in his brain; and then the next instant the tears were trickling down his cheeks. Hours passed away—and he continued in a strange unnatural state of mind,—at one moment rebelling against the soft influence of his wife, and with difficulty preventing himself from sending to the canteen for liquor; at another moment melting into tenderness, and vowing that he would never again do anything to vex that amiable woman or impair her confidence in him. Thus passed the time, until it was verging towards ten o'clock in the evening. His comrades, who occupied the same room with himself, were now all assembled there, and about to get ready for retiring to rest. Presently there was a knock at the door; and the individual who answered it, said that the boy from the canteen wanted to speak to Lonsdale. Frederick, who was just beginning to undress, hastened out upon the landing, to inquire what the boy wanted.

"There's a person just been and told me to give you this note:"—and as the lad thus explained himself, he thrust a soiled and dirty letter into Frederick's hand. Our hero tore it open, and read the following lines:—

"There's a conspiracy going on against your wife. She is being enticed away to a certain place, where her ruin will be accomplished. It's of no use for you to run off to her lodging, because the people of the house don't know where she has gone. But if you choose to come out and join me, I will take you to the place. I shall be about fifty yards outside the barrack-gate: you can manage to slip out.

"A FRIEND."

This note was written in a rude, scrawling manner, but in a hand totally unknown to our hero. He was instantaneously smitten with dismay: but reckless of all consequences, he speedily resolved upon complying with the terms of the letter. Dismissing the boy—with-out thinking of putting to him a single question as to the individual who had sent the letter—Lonsdale rushed back into the room, and caught up his cap. Two or three of his comrades, perceiving his wild appearance, asked him what was the matter; and one of them considerably reminded him that he was under arrest and had better be cautious what he did. But Frederick heeded not the words that were spoken; there was hurry in his brain—frenzy in his thoughts—burning fire in his heart; and the image of Gerald Redburn was uppermost in his mind as the perpetrator of the atrocity that he was now so mysteriously called upon to prevent.

He rushed down the stairs—he traversed the barrack-yard—he paid no attention to the question which a sentry put to him; but he rushed onward, only slackening his pace when he had cleared the gate. At a short distance therefrom, it was nearly quite dark; but amidst the gloom Frederick perceived a man loitering about, and immediately felt convinced that this was the individual who was waiting for him. He therefore accosted him, demanding hurriedly, "Are you the person who sent me a letter? My name is Lonsdale."

"Come with me," answered the stranger: and moving on in front, he led the way rapidly through the streets. But quickly as the man went, his speed appeared a snail's pace to Lonsdale, who would have flown, had he been aware of the proper direction to pursue. He had not caught the slightest glimpse of his guide's countenance; for the place was not only dark where they had met, but the individual's features were thrown into a still deeper shade by a wide-brimmed slouching hat that he wore. Nor did he particularly notice the man's walk as he led the way; for their course was pursued through streets of a poor description, where there were few lights, and these scarcely serving to dispel the gloom that pervaded those thoroughfares. All that Lonsdale now remarked was that the man seemed to be clad in a coarse, poverty-stricken style; and the only circumstance which he had observed, at first, was that he had appeared to speak in a feigned voice. This however was a matter of no consequence, and one which stayed not a moment in the soldier's thoughts: for how did it signify to him who the individual was, or what his motive could be, since it appeared evident it was a friendly part he was playing? Nor indeed had Frederick sufficient command over his feelings for deliberate reflection at all: he followed his guide in a state of frenzy mingled with a burning, boiling rage against the author of the vile proceeding, whoever he might be. But that this was Captain Redburn he had very little doubt.

The man led on, Lonsdale following close at his heels. They passed through several alleys and lanes which our hero had never threaded

before—until at length the guide turned into one which was almost completely dark, and seemed to be a court having no egress at the other extremity. Suddenly the man stopped near the door of a house, the lower shutters of which were closed; but through the loopholes, as well as from a window above, lights were flickering feebly forth—the only ones that rescued the place from utter gloom.

"One word, Mr. Lonsdale," said the stranger, placing his back towards those beams of light in such a manner as to keep his countenance still as much as possible in the shade. "I need hardly tell you that you will have to act with boldness and promptitude. You will knock at that door: in reply to your question, if you stop to put any, the woman of the house is certain to tell you that no person answering the description of your wife is within her walls. Don't believe it. Rush straight up stairs. You see that light in the room on the first-floor—you will be able to judge were it situated—burst in there—kick down the door, if you find it locked—and it may be that you won't have come too late."

Having thus spoken in a low whispering voice, but which was still evidently disguised, the man turned away. In so doing his countenance caught the rays streaming through the holes in the ground-floor shutters. Lonsdale, though fearfully excited, and about to rush at the door of that den of infamy, was for an instant stricken with horror and dismay: for it assuredly was the countenance of a monster and not of a human being of which he had just caught a glimpse. Never was there such a spectacle of loathsome horror. But we need not describe the face again: it has already been depicted to our readers.

The man hurried away: and the next instant Lonsdale, forgetting all about him,—having now only one idea predominant over his actions,—rushed up to the front door, at which he knocked violently. Doubtless the woman of the house thought it was one of her usual patrons; and she hastened to answer the summons. As the door thus opened, Frederick perceived, by a light burning in the passage, that the female was an elderly one of respectable appearance, though with a very red face. She looked both astonished and frightened on perceiving that it was a private soldier; and doubtless judging by the wild rage of his looks, she instantaneously suspected who he really was. Speedily however assuming an angry air, she exclaimed, "And pray who are you, coming to a respectable house in this unceremonious manner?"

Lonsdale was rushing past her, when she caught him by the tails of his coat, crying out, "Help! help!" He dashed her violently away, so that she fell heavily against the side of the passage and was stunned by the blow. A couple of females, whose immodest looks denoted what they were, issued from an adjoining room; but Lonsdale was already more than half way up the staircase. He reached the landing—he tried the handle of the door of that apartment which had been pointed out to him. He found that the door itself was locked; he

burst it open—and with a wild cry of joy, his wife sprang into his arms. A glance showed Lonsdale that Gerald Redburn was likewise in that chamber; and tearing himself away from Lucy, Frederick sprang towards him like an infuriate tiger. Gerald drew his sword from its sheath, crying out, "Keep off—or I will kill you!"—but Frederick, snatching away the weapon from him with as much ease as if it were a conflict between a giant and a dwarf, broke it in halves; and the next moment, with a blow of his clenched fist, he stretched Redburn senseless upon the floor.

"Come Lucy—come!" he said, not pausing to ascertain whether he had killed the young officer or merely stunned him: and he hurried his wildly excited wife down the staircase.

The two young females below were at the moment bearing the woman of the house into the room whence they had issued; and at the next instant our hero and Lucy had crossed the threshold of that den of infamy. For some minutes they were both unable to give utterance to a word; but the wife clung to her husband as they threaded their way in the direction of the lodging. He felt her bosom palpitating and throbbing violently against the arm to which she thus clung with such confiding tenaciousness. At length they reached the house where Lucy dwelt. They ascended to the chamber, in which the landlady was sitting, while little Freddy still slept soundly; and then Lucy, throwing herself into her husband's arms, wept and sobbed convulsively. The woman of the house knew not what to understand from this scene; and Frederick, perceiving that she lingered, bade her somewhat impatiently to withdraw.

It was sometime before mutual explanations could be given. At length Lucy grew sufficiently calm to enter upon hers. She told Frederick, how the elderly woman had come and beguiled her away—and how, thinking only of her father, she had followed unsuspiciously into the house whither she was conducted. She had been led up-stairs to the room whence she was rescued; and there the woman had abruptly left her. Not immediately noticing this hurried departure, Lucy had flown to the bed which was in that room and was surrounded by curtains—expecting to find her sire stretched in illness there. But the couch was empty. Then a suspicion of treachery flashed to her mind: she turned round—and for the first time perceived that she was alone. She tried the door—but it was locked: her worst suspicions were confirmed. She shrieked for assistance; but none came. Half frenzied, she had tried to beat down the door; but she could not. Exhausted with her efforts, and well nigh overpowered by the harrowed state of her feelings, she had sunk upon a seat in a half-stupor. Ten minutes had probably thus elapsed, when she heard footsteps ascending the stairs. The door opened—and Gerald Redburn made his appearance. His countenance was flushed with wine; and instantaneously locking the door, to which Lucy had flown in the hope of anticipating this movement on his part, he at once addressed her in terms that armed her with the fortitude of



desperation. At first they were cajoleries, and brilliant promises, and earnest entreaties, which Redburn had used; but finding that he was scorned, and loathed, and hated, he had recourse to menaces—threatening to wreak the direst vengeance upon her husband, unless she succumbed. She upbraided him with all the bitterness and resolution she was capable of displaying; and it was in the midst of this scene that her husband had burst in to her rescue.

On the other hand, Frederick's explanations were still more promptly given. He showed his wife the note he had received; and now, recollecting the glimpse which he had caught of that monster-countenance, he wondered more and more who the unknown friend could have been. He was however but little disposed for deliberation on the subject; the direst rage filled his heart—and with most rancorous bitterness did he express a hope that Gerald Redburn was killed by the blow he had dealt him. Notwithstanding all she had gone through and the excitement of her own feelings, Lucy shuddered as her husband thus spoke; but though she again flew into his arms, she could not utter a single syllable of remonstrance; for she felt—and profoundly felt—that he had but too good reason for the expression of that wish, dark and dreadful though it were. But as her thoughts grew more collected, she began to inquire, with suspense and apprehension, what new dangers he had laid himself open to encounter, by leaving the barracks “after hours,” and likewise while under arrest?

“I fear nothing on that head, Lucy,” replied Lonsdale. “This time, instead of being complained against, it is I that shall become the accuser; and if the idea of British justice be not a mockery and a farce, I will have it against that fiend Redburn—unless, indeed, mine own hand shall have dealt it already. And now, dear Lucy, I must bid you farewell. You will of course give certain explanations to the landlady to account for what she saw just now.”

Frederick took his departure from the lodging, with rage still in his heart, and a fiery indignation thrilling along every nerve—boiling in every vein. His throat was as parched as if he had been swallowing ashes; and he could not possibly resist the inclination to turn into a public-house, as he went along, and obtain some drink. This excited him still more, if possible; but he lost not possession of his intellect. On the contrary, he retained it completely; his sense of wrong was sharpened to an edge so keen that it appeared as if nothing could blunt it. On reaching the barracks, he made straight for the Colonel's apartments; and on inquiring if that officer was within, he received a reply in the affirmative. The servant—who was himself one of the private soldiers of the regiment—bade Lonsdale to wait a minute while he informed the Colonel that he was there. In a short time the man re-appeared, and conducted Lonsdale to the apartment where Wyndham was seated, smoking a cigar, and drinking spirits-and-water. But as Frederick entered that room, he heard an inner door close,

as if some one who was with the Colonel had just disappeared in that direction.

“Well, Lonsdale—what is it?” demanded Wyndham, in an abrupt and angry tone.

“Sir,” was the response, “I seek justice at your hands, if you can give it to me; and if not, I must look for it elsewhere.”

“Now, my man,” said the Colonel, coldly and distantly, “don't commence with this half-implied threat. If you have been wronged, you have a right to look to me for justice; but you have no business to anticipate that you will not obtain it.”

“If I spoke disrespectfully, sir, I am exceedingly sorry. My feelings are most painfully excited. The person whom I complain against is Captain Redburn.”

“Well, what about him?” demanded the Colonel, still coolly puffing his cigar, and lounging back in the chair, with one leg thrown carelessly over the other.

“By an atrocious conspiracy, sir, with a woman of an infamous description—and by means of a well-concerted tale—my wife was beguiled to a den of abomination. I received a note penned by I know not whom, giving me warning that such was the case. Here is that note;”—and Frederick handed it to the Colonel.

“Well,” said Wyndham, glancing over it, “And I suppose you went there? You were under arrest, weren't you?”

“I was, sir. But had I been under ten thousand arrests, I would have flown to the rescue of my wife!”

“Softly, softly,” interrupted Wyndham, sternly; “you must not address me in this language; it is full of menaces and breaches of discipline.”

“But you can make allowances, sir,” cried Lonsdale, indignantly, “for the outrage my feelings have received!”

“Feelings!” muttered the Colonel to himself in a contemptuous manner; “I wonder what the deuce a private soldier has to do with feelings;”—then he added aloud, “Well, continue your tale. You went to that place—eh?”

“And I rescued my wife. In my anger I flew at Captain Redburn—he drew his sword—I seized it—took it from him—broke it in halves. I then dashed him on the floor. Perhaps, sir, he may never recover to meet this accusation.”

“You can make yourself easy on that head,” interrupted Wyndham; for he entered the barracks just now. I saw him.”

“Then, sir, I demand justice at your hands,” ejaculated Lonsdale, whose excitement gave an expression of fierceness alike to his language and his looks.

“I am prepared to make all possible allowances for you,” said the Colonel, still in a cool, off-hand manner, as he continued to puff his cigar; “but if you address me in this intemperate tone, I shall be compelled to punish you.”

“Good heavens, sir!” cried our hero, almost driven to despair; “is it to be supposed that I have no feeling? Is the poor private soldier to sever himself from all those emotions and senti-

ments which other human beings are allowed to display? You are not married, Colonel Wyndham—but if you were, you would understand all that is now passing in my mind. Indeed, as a gentleman—as a man of the world—you *must* know what I feel; you *must* comprehend it! I have a wife whom I love, and who has been an angel to me——”

“Come, come—we don’t want any poetic rhapsodies,” interrupted the Colonel. “You are excited—and I think not altogether with your feelings. But, notwithstanding, I am prepared to make every allowance. Now, Lonsdale, this matter must be hushed up.”

“Hushed up, sir? Never!” ejaculated our hero, stamping his foot upon the carpet in a rage.

“But I say that it *must*, though,” answered the Colonel; “and for your sake—or rather for your wife’s—as well as for Captain Redburn’s.”

“For my sake!” exclaimed Lonsdale, scornfully and indignantly. “Is my silence to be purchased by the promise of a gentler treatment for the future? No, sir, let me continue a marked man in the regiment—let me remain subjected to every species of petty tyranny and annoyance—let me even be tied up again to the triangle and scourged almost to death—then, when the wounds are healed, let me be tied up again, and so on again and again, as often as you will—but tell me not that I must consent to any compromise in this matter! Ah, and you said for my wife’s sake also?—what could be the meaning of that expression? Does the black-hearted villain dare for a moment hint that she proceeded to that house of infamy by her own consent?”

“I have listened to you with more patience than I thought myself capable of displaying,” answered Colonel Wyndham; “because for the third time I tell you I am making allowances for your feelings. But don’t tax that patience too far—or I shall cut short our colloquy and place you under close arrest. I don’t want to threaten you unnecessarily; so take warning.”

Lonsdale literally groaned in spirit as he listened to these words. No sympathy for the private soldier!—no real compassion for the outrage he had received in the person of his wife!—merely the cold assurance that an allowance was made for any excitement he might display.—but even *this* accompanied in the same breath with positive menace!

“We were talking about your wife, Lonsdale—and I repeat,” continued the Colonel, “that for her sake it would be better this should go no further. Captain Redburn would be certain to say that she had met him of her own free will——”

“Then, sir, he would lie like a foul-hearted villain that he is!” vociferated Lonsdale, his eyes literally flaming with rage.

“Silence, sir! I will hear no more of this,” exclaimed the Colonel sternly. “I tell you what Captain Redburn would say, and I don’t know whether it would be true or not.”

“It would be false, sir—false as hell itself!” cried our hero, utterly unable to subdue his excitement

“Well, it might be,” observed Wyndham, coolly. “A great many men think their wives paragons of virtue, when perhaps they are not altogether such angelic creatures.”

“Do *you*, Colonel Wyndham,” asked Lonsdale, his voice suddenly becoming low and hoarse, and his countenance white as a sheet,—“do *you* throw out any aspersion upon my wife’s character?”—and his fist was clenched while he leant partially forward as if ready to spring upon his officer, should a word come from his lips or a look glance from his eyes calculated to threaten the reputation of Lucy Lonsdale with insult.

“For my part I know nothing about your wife,” responded Wyndham, superciliously and almost contemptuously; while he did not choose even to appear to take notice of the menacing attitude that Lonsdale had assumed. “I only tell you what Captain Redburn is certain to say whether true or false; and how can it be *improved*? The woman who, as you allege, enticed your wife to her house, would not confess that she had done so, but would tell a tale to corroborate Captain Redburn’s; and I can assure you, if there was an inquiry, that tale would be believed.”

Thus speaking, the Colonel lighted another cigar with a piece of paper that he rolled up in an apparently careless manner, and applied to the wax candle. Lonsdale did not notice the circumstance; he was thunderstruck by the tremendous amount of iniquity thus displayed to his view. The idea had suddenly occurred to him that the Colonel had already heard the history of the evening’s transactions from Captain Redburn, previous to his own arrival—and moreover that the individual who had retired to the inner room, might be Gerald himself. Frederick saw that his wife’s honour was indeed in the hands of an unscrupulous villain. Not for a single instant did he suspect her purity or doubt her virtue; not for a moment did he believe that Lucy had of her own accord met Gerald Redburn. But he could not shut his eyes to the fact that a tale might be told to prove that she was a consenting party; and the woman who had beguiled her, would no doubt give evidence corroborative in that sense, though utterly false.

“Well, Colonel Wyndham,” said our hero, in the low deep voice of despair, “I see that I have nothing to expect at your hands. Give me back that note which warned me of the conspiracy. I will endeavour to find out the writer—and perhaps he may afford evidence in proof of my version of the story.”

“Oh, certainly!—take back the letter,” said the officer. “But, dear me! where is it? By Jove, I recollect I must have lighted my cigar with it.”

“Ah!” ejaculated Lonsdale, now completely convinced that the Colonel was in league with Gerald Redburn to hush up the matter; and again did a boiling rage flood his entire being with a stream of lava, running along every nerve and fibre—pouring through every vein and artery.

“Well, I am very sorry,” said the Colonel coolly; “but it can’t be helped. It was altogether an inadvertence on my part. Now, I



tell you what, Lonsdale—go quietly to your quarters—I release you from arrest—and if you are a good fellow, you have nothing to fear in future.”

Our hero, half-bewildered, half-desperate—not knowing how to act—feeling that there was a vengeance to wreak, but not daring to wreak it—feeling too that there was justice to be obtained, yet not knowing how to obtain it—maddened at the idea of finding himself forced to drop the business—yet painfully fearful of having his wife's honour crushed beneath the weight of circumstantial evidence—experiencing likewise the overwhelming conviction that he and she stood, humble and defenceless as they were, opposed to men of unscrupulous characters who would leave no stone unturned to ruin them,—Lonsdale, we say, feeling and knowing all this, remained motionless as a statue, gazing vacantly upon Colonel Wyndham. Suddenly he turned round, and hastened away from the apartment.

As he was going forth from the Colonel's quarters, he said to the domestic, “Was not Captain Redburn with your master when I came?”

“Well, he was, Lonsdale—and that's the truth,” replied the man, speaking in a whisper. “But don't say that I told you so; for the Colonel ordered me not to mention it. But is anything the matter?”

“Nothing, nothing,” was our hero's hurried and somewhat petulant response: and he returned to his own quarters in a state of mind that may be more easily understood than described.

The moment he had issued from the Colonel's presence, that inner door opened, and Gerald Redburn came forth, laughing heartily in the disagreeable tones of his weak, cracked voice.

“By Jove! Wyndham, you did it capitally,” he exclaimed, flinging himself upon a chair and taking up a cigar. “I listened to every word that passed. But what was said in the note that you so cleverly burnt?”

The Colonel repeated, as well as he could recollect, the contents of the letter.

“I wonder whether it was that monster-looking scoundrel who could have played me a trick? But stay—I have got about me the note he sent to me telling me to go to that appointment. Is this the same hand-writing?”

“Exactly! I could swear to it,” answered the Colonel, as he looked at the letter which Redburn handed him. “But why the deuce should he have played you this trick?”

“I can't make it out at all,” replied Gerald. “You see that he tells me in the note to give to the woman of the house whatever reward I might think him entitled to, as it is not likely I shall meet him again. So, on reaching the place, I was fool enough to put twenty pounds into the hag's hands. I dare say the scoundrel will get half of it—”

“Well, no matter,” interrupted Wyndham: “the affair is evidently settled—for I am certain Lonsdale will take no farther step in it. And if he did, what would be the use? You would say that his wife met you of her own accord—the woman of the house would tell the

same story—and the whole thing would resolve itself into an intrigue with a pretty woman, which the husband happened to find out. And now, Redburn, I have done you this service—you must perform the promise you made me.”

“To be sure! You may rely upon it, Wyndham,” answered the Captain. “Let me see—what was it you said? A thousand guineas—eh?”

“Yes—just a cool thousand that I want to borrow of you,” responded the Colonel, continuing to puff his cigar in a manner as tranquil and leisurely as he spoke. “You said that you had five hundred at your banker's.”

“For which I will at once write you a cheque: and to-morrow I will send off a despatch to the governor, pitching him a tale that will make him send me the rest.”

“That will do,” observed Wyndham: “so long as I have the other five hundred in a few days.”

“Creditors getting rather clamorous—eh?” remarked Redburn, with another laugh, as he mixed himself a tumbler of spirits-and-water: then, having written the cheque, he continued to enjoy his cigar and grog, consoled for his disappointment in respect to Lucy by what he considered to be the clever and agreeable manner in which, by the Colonel's connivance, he had been extricated from the very serious dilemma wherein the business had plunged him.

Before concluding the present chapter, we must give a few words of explanation. Colonel Wyndham in his heart hated and despised Gerald Redburn; but a very serious loss at the gaming-table had reduced the Colonel to such a strait that for a time he saw no alternative but to sell his commission and leave the army. Gerald, on hastening back to the barracks after his adventure with Lucy and her husband, went straight to the Colonel, in the hope of winning him over to his interests. He knew of Wyndham's difficulties, which had been whispered amongst the officers; and he accordingly threw out a hint that he should be happy to lend him five hundred or a thousand guineas for as long as he might need the accommodation. Wyndham snapped at the larger sum: an understanding was promptly arrived at between the two; and the result has been seen in the treatment that Lonsdale experienced at the hands of his commanding officer. For, be it understood, that if the Colonel had taken Lonsdale's part and done him proper justice, he must have brought Captain Redburn to a court-martial for ungentlemanly and unofficer-like conduct—the issue of which would have been the inevitable cashiering of the accused, inasmuch as he possessed so few friends amongst the officers of the regiment, who would have to judge him in the matter.

By the course he had adopted, Colonel Wyndham gained two points. In the first place he relieved himself from his pecuniary difficulties; and in the second place, by refusing to see justice done to Lucy, he was revenged upon her for the rejection of his overtures some years back when the regiment was quartered at Portsmouth.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## INTEMPERANCE, HYPOCRISY, AND DECEIT.

FREDERICK LONSDALE passed a sleepless night: he was tortured by a thousand pangs—racked by the most harrowing reflections. But upon all these we need not dwell: suffice it to say, he was forced into the conclusion that to save his wife's honour from the aspersions which unprincipled individuals would throw upon it, he must abandon the hope of obtaining justice against the ruffian who had sought to outrage and ruin her. In short, Lonsdale must move no further in the matter. Gallant and bitter indeed was such a decision: but there was no alternative. Being relieved from arrest, he was enabled to visit the lodging on the morrow; and he explained to Lucy all the particulars of his interview with the Colonel. It pained him to be compelled to mention to his wife the threat that had been held out; but he could not avoid revealing everything, in order to account for the decision to which he had been driven—namely, to let the matter drop. Lucy was cruelly shocked at hearing that her virtue was even breathed upon by suspicion's taint on the part of those unscrupulous men; but her husband assured her, with so many fond endearments, that he himself believed not for a moment the villainous construction which was thus sought to be put upon her conduct, that she grew pacified. At all events she calmed herself as well as she was able; and indeed, the unfortunate young woman had experienced so many sorrows in her life, that she began to regard each successive one as belonging to a destiny which must be accepted with resignation.

Several weeks passed; and Lonsdale experienced no renewal of Redburn's petty tyrannies. Indeed this officer avoided meeting him as much as possible; and as our hero was not in the Company which he commanded, there was little opportunity for them to come into collision. But during this interval Frederick had gradually become a more frequent visitor to the canteen, and a less constant one at his wife's lodging. There were moments when he was so tortured by a sense of the wrongs he had sustained, and his powerlessness to avenge them, that he felt himself compelled as it were to fly to the use of stimulants to distract his thoughts. At first he drank with what he considered to be moderation—that is to say, merely to excite himself somewhat without becoming absolutely inebriated; and he studiously endeavoured to keep the circumstance from his wife. But this course of conduct led to certain little hypocrisies and deceits, at length merging into downright falsehoods, upon which he could not help thinking, when perfectly sober, with shame and anguish. He first of all ate carraway seeds to disguise the odor of liquor in his breath; and in order to account for the increasing irregularity of his visits, and sometimes his total absence altogether, he would devise tales of extra duty to be performed—of attentions to be shown to a sick comrade—and other artifices of a similar de-

scription. He soon took to smoking: and then it no longer continued necessary to chew the carraway seeds. It was of course impossible for him to deny that he smoked: but he assured Lucy that it had been recommended to him by the surgeon of the regiment; and in order to excite her sympathy, and disarm her of those reproaches and remonstrances which, however gently and delicately made, he feared she might address to him—he affirmed that it was in consequence of a debility and a sensation of pain which the two cruel scourgings he had undergone had left behind, that he was thus advised to have recourse to tobacco.

The habit of smoking gave an impulse to that of drinking, not only by producing thirst, but also because it encouraged Lonsdale to sit for intervals together in the tap-room of the canteen, instead of merely standing at the bar imbibing his liquor and departing when he had drunk it. Moreover he required money—in addition to the beggarly pittance that remained to him from his pay after the usual deductions—to minister to these habits that were growing upon him. And now came fresh excuses—fresh artifices—fresh falsehoods, every time he encroached upon the little pecuniary stock. On one occasion it was a comrade who had got into trouble and required a little assistance. On another occasion it was to make up a sum of money to assist the half starving wife and children of another comrade: then perhaps it was to contribute towards setting up a soldier's widow in a little business—or else it was to purchase some accoutrement to replace one he had lost. All these were pure fictions; and though at first Lonsdale had devised them with difficulty and told them with a very bad grace, yet by degrees he became hardened, and made his statements with a glib tongue and an unblushing countenance.

Poor Lucy endeavoured for a long time to close her eyes as much as possible against the actual truth: she sought to persuade herself that her suspicions were unfounded—that it was only her fancy that Frederick looked excited as if with liquor—and that it was impossible his moral courage and natural excellence of disposition could thus be giving way. Never did a reasoner argue more strenuously to convince an opponent, than did this poor young woman to persuade herself that what she feared was contrary to what she hoped. Thus weeks and months passed away: but Lucy could not continue for ever to reason herself against the patent evidence of facts. The pretext for encroaching on their store—the excuses for irregular visits and protracted absences—the evasions with which her husband sought to account for his flushed cheeks and excited manner,—all combined to destroy his wife's confidence in the rectitude of his conduct, and to preclude the possibility of shutting her eyes any longer to the fearful truth.

But did she reproach him? did she upbraid him? did she even remonstrate with him? No: she did nothing of all this—at least not at first. But she redoubled, if possible, the attentions and assiduities which she was ever wont to show him when he was at the lodging. She



endeavoured to render the little home so comfortable that he might have all the less excuse for keeping away from it. She assumed a cheerfulness which she did not and could not feel, and studied her best to make her humble abode attractive. She increased the hitherto prescribed amount to be laid out for the tea and supper which he took with her—that is to say, when he was there—and also for the Sunday's dinner: she prepared for him little delicacies which she thought would please his palate; and when he took leave of her for the evening, she would tell him with the sweetest smile—but, alas! all forced and artificial—that if he would be sure and come on the morrow, he would find something nicer than even the repast of which he had been partaking. Thus Lucy herself, though with the best intentions in the world, was gradually led into certain little extravagances: but as she weekly and daily beheld their stock of money diminishing, she toiled all the more ardently with her needle in order to supply the deficiencies as much as possible.

There were times when Frederick Lonsdale contemplated with the bitterest anguish the course that he was pursuing. He saw that his wife understood it all, and that though she appeared satisfied with the excuses he was constantly making to encroach upon their funds and to absent himself from the lodging, yet that she studied by her demeanour to show that she put faith in all he said. He looked back to other times when he would have hated himself for even causing that excellent woman a single moment's uneasiness: but now there was scarcely a day that he was not planting a dagger in her heart. He felt that his conduct was cruel to a degree, although his manner towards his wife and child still continued kind and affectionate when he was with them. But after all, this was a mere negative kindness: it was only the passive abstention from actual ill-treatment, while in reality the course he was pursuing was one continued series of aggressions on their happiness, comfort, and welfare. On those occasions when his better feelings thus asserted their empire and he was enabled to reflect upon the cruelty of his conduct, he would record in his own soul the most sacred vows and pledges to reform. He would even pray to heaven, in anguish and bitterness of spirit, for strength of mind to keep this resolve: but temptations would fall in his way—or some tyranny on the part of his superiors would aggravate him; and then he would go to the canton again. Sometimes in one of those remorseful moods, he would wander out into the open country like a forlorn and desolate being—asking himself what he could possibly do to retrieve the moral ground he had lost—crying out in the strong voice of conscience-stricken anguish—and again imploring heaven to save him ere it was too late. But heaven helps not those who help not themselves: and Lonsdale did not help himself!

Thus time passed on; and though he was not yet a drunkard, yet he was a drinker. On no occasion had he committed such an excess as to become absolutely helpless: he had never

got downright intoxicated: he had hitherto been rather a tippler than a confirmed sot. But these are merely the phases and gradations which the victim of intemperance is passing through. Few fall all of a sudden—and least of all a man whose mind is naturally strong and whose principles are inherently good, as Lonsdale's had hitherto been. But yet, for all this, the descent is rapid enough; and a few months, when the habit of drinking is once imbibed, make fearful inroads both upon strength of mind and goodness of principle. So was it with our hero. The periods of remorse occurred at longer intervals; and their duration became shorter and shorter. A certain recklessness was superseding that yearning struggle which he at first made to regain the lost ground of the past; and unfortunately, in his bitter wrongs and excruciating sorrows, he began to find for himself a sufficient justification for the course he was pursuing.

Alas for poor Lucy! When her eyes were once completely opened to the lamentable truth—when she no longer dared attempt to reason herself to the contrary—she felt that her happiness was being extinguished by inches. She toiled and toiled with her needle to supply the encroachments made upon the money she had brought from France: but the outgoings far exceeded the incomings. She kept her apartment in the nicest possible order—the little boy was always dressed with neatness, though plainly—she herself presented a corresponding appearance—she taught him his lessons, to which his father paid now but little attention—and she had to devote time to the preparation of those meals by means of which she sought to lure her husband to the humble home. To accomplish all this, engrossed a considerable portion of her time; and she was therefore compelled to sit up later and later by night in order to indemnify herself on the score of her work. It was a hard task for poor Lucy to assume a constant air of cheerfulness in the presence of her husband; and when he was not there, the revulsion of feelings which she experienced was often bitter indeed. She would look back with anguished regret to those periods when they were located at Carlisle—or when they dwelt in Finsbury and in Calais—as seasons of happiness that had flown, never to return! Often and often was she tempted to fling herself at her husband's feet, and implore him by the love they felt for each other—for the sake of their dear child—and by every solemn and sacred tie that bound them all to each other, that he would renounce the habits which were so fatally growing upon him. But she feared that even the tenderest remonstrance might be taken for a reproach—the most fervid prayer for an upbraiding: and she trembled—Oh, the poor creature trembled—to do aught that should alienate Frederick still more from her home!

Frequently during the intervals of his absence—but when he ought to be there—Lucy would find herself dropping the work from her hands and falling into the most mournful reverie. The tears would unconsciously steal down her countenance; and her bosom would

become convulsed with gasping sobs. Then the little boy would approach, and look up so wistfully into his mother's face; and when he saw that she wept he also would weep, and flinging his little arms around her neck, would beg and entreat her not to cry. When the mind of a parent is happy, there is something ineffably delicious in the endearments of a child: but when that mind is oppressed with cruel woe, those endearments enhance its bitterness—for the child itself becomes an object of gloomy apprehension for the future. And into this train of reflection did Lucy often fall. If anything should happen to her husband, she would still toil on to maintain herself and the child in as much respectability and comfort as might be possible: but if anything should happen to her, what would become of that darling boy? Oh, when she gazed upon the sweet child's countenance—passed her fingers through his curly locks that were soft as silk—looked into his beautiful bright eyes—and listened to the music of his voice, an excruciating pang would shoot through her heart: her brain would reel—and she would almost wish that he had never been born. Then she would retrospect to those times when he was a source of joy, and comfort, and pride, alike to herself and her husband: but now the father was gradually neglecting him more and more—and she, the poor mother, felt that upon her alone depended little Frederick's welfare!

Amidst the various excuses which Lonsdale had made to his wife for the habits he had contracted, there was one which was not altogether false, though it was used for a false purpose. We allude to the pains which he declared that he experienced as the result of the two cruel scourgings he had received with the Satanic cat-o'-nine tails. Yes; this was indeed true. For there were times when he felt pangs shooting through the loins as if they were those of an acute rheumatism; and his lungs showed evident symptoms of being affected. One day, when he found himself spitting blood,—and it happened to be on an occasion that he had taken no strong drink—one of those intervals of remorseful feeling which now, alas! were so few and so far between,—he sped in dismay to the regimental surgeon to ask his advice. The medical man examined him; and then coolly said that it was all the result of the floggings he had received. He gave Lonsdale some medicine, and forthwith went off to a billiard-table, taking it quite as a matter of course that the infliction of military torture should thus threaten to abridge the life of a fellow-creature. Lonsdale mentioned not to Lucy the incident which we have just related: but it served on the other hand to revive the keenest sense of the wrongs he had endured and drove him again to strong drink wherein to drown his cares.

Fifteen months had elapsed since our hero had been brought back to his regiment; and it was now the beginning of Spring, 1836. The regiment, at this period, suddenly received orders to remove to the town of Middleton, which was but a few miles distant from the village of Oakleigh. Disturbances amongst the working classes were apprehended in that dis-

trict; and hence the determination of the Government to send so considerable a number of troops to Middleton. When Lonsdale heard the intelligence, he treated it with the utmost indifference: for his soul was becoming quite callous to those circumstances which a few months back would have been fraught with very different feelings on his part. But when he repaired to the lodging to communicate the tidings to Lucy, the thought of returning into the neighbourhood of her own native village suddenly overpowered her with varied and conflicting emotions. At a glance of her mental vision, she embraced all those scenes that were associated with such tender memories for her,—the village of Oakleigh with its picturesque church—the stream in the grove, where she and Frederick were wont to snatch their stolen interviews, and where their mutual love was first avowed—the cottage upon the green slope where she was born, and where she had passed so many years of her life,—all, all were vividly reproduced in her mind. She burst into tears: it was an agony of emotions which at that instant she endured. Her husband said a few words to solace her, and just caressed her cheek with his hand: but his arms were not now thrown lovingly round her neck—he snatched her not to his breast—he lavished not upon her those endearments which but a few months back, under such circumstances, he would have bestowed. Yet he was not actually unkind: he did not speak impatiently—he did not chide her for her tears; but this falling off from the tenderness of other times was in itself a callousness and an indifference in the estimation of poor Lucy.

"Well, my dear," he said, after she had conquered her feelings and was forcing herself to smile again, "in three days the regiment is to set out. You and little Fred had better take your departure by the coach to-morrow or next day—so that you will have a comfortable lodging by the time I get there."

"Yes—with pleasure—as you wish it, Frederick," she answered; though at the same time the thought struck her that this was not the course he would have adopted a while back; he would have told her to follow only after he himself should have reached the place of destination, so that he might have a lodging ready for the reception of his wife and child.

"And now," he continued, not perceiving that the plan he recommended had produced a sorrowful effect upon Lucy, "let us see how the funds stand. Come, my dear, be quick and open your desk: for I must hasten back to quarters and make some little arrangements."

Lucy *did* make haste to open the desk, because she feared that her husband was at the least thing inclined to be angry—and yet she knew not at what; but her hands trembled, for she was well aware that the stock of money she was about to display was at a very low ebb.

"How much have we?" demanded Frederick, who, instead of having any arrangements to make at the barracks, had a party of his comrades waiting for him at the canteen.

"We have one pound in gold here—five pounds, the deposit left at the warehouse—and



I have a few shillings in my purse, besides a trifle to receive for work. Altogether," added Lucy, "we can command about seven pounds."

"Seven pounds!" ejaculated her husband: "is that all? Why, we had sixty when you came from Calais!"

"I know it, Frederick," responded Lucy, in a mournful tone; but instantly brightening up, she exclaimed with a forced smile of cheerfulness, "There is ample for our wants. I have but a week's rent to pay for the room, and no debts. Freddy and I can go outside the coach; and after all these expenses, we shall yet have money—ample indeed—to settle us at Middleton until I can procure work there."

"But how is it possible we could have spent so much?" demanded our hero. "Why the money seems to have slipped away like water: and yet you have earned sixteen or eighteen shillings a week. Why don't you answer, Lucy? Come, tell me. You kept the purse—and you ought to know how all the money has gone."

"My dear husband," she said, with difficulty keeping back her tears, "I have noted down every farthing of our expenditure—there is a regular account——"

"Well, then," interrupted Frederick petulantly, "just let me have a look at it; for I really can't understand it!" and he spoke in a harsher manner than ever he had done before.

Lucy opened another compartment of her desk, and drew forth a little account-book, wherein the financial entries were all duly made in her own neat hand-writing—that pretty writing which her husband had once been wont to admire. He took the book somewhat rudely from her hand; and at the moment a tear dropped upon the cover. To wipe it away with her kerchief was the work of an instant; and then she swept that kerchief across her eyes.

"Come, come, Lucy—this is foolish—this is foolish," said her husband, softened by her grief. "I didn't mean to say anything harsh; only I thought it odd that so much money should have gone—for heaven knows where we are to get any more!"

"Do not trouble yourself upon that head, dearest Frederick," his wife hastily rejoined. "I can work at Middleton as well as in Manchester:" and she endeavoured to smile through the tears which were still glistening in her eyes.

Our hero sat down and began to examine the account book. It was not that he mistrusted Lucy in the management of their finances, but it was because he was really at a loss to conjecture how the money had gone—and he had become too callous to her feelings to recollect that it might wound her thus to investigate the items of the expenditure. Nor did he continue that investigation long: for the frequent recurrence of different sums of money put down to himself, startled him with the fact that it was *he* who had made such inroads upon their store. Nevertheless, he did observe also that the cost for those delicacies which had been served up at the evening repasts was likewise great: and being thrown into an ill-humor by the consciousness of his own extravagance, he could not help venting it somewhat upon his poor wife.

"What a lot of money," he said, "has gone for suppers—it is positively awful!"

"I am sorry you should make this remark, Frederick—because they were provided to conduce to your comfort:"—and again had Lucy the utmost difficulty in keeping back an outburst of anguish; for her husband's words struck her as being unkind almost to cruelty.

"Well, I am sorry you should have got such things for me—I didn't want them—and I am sure I never asked for them. They were here—and so I partook of them; but I couldn't have thought for a moment that they would have run away with the money in this manner. Why, what the deuce ails you now? How foolish you are this evening."

The afflicted wife was sobbing with convulsive anguish; and the little boy, seeing that his mother wept, began to cry also, saying, "Pray, papa, don't scold dear mamma."

"Nonsense, Fred—hold your tongue!" said Lonsdale. "Come, Lucy—I didn't mean to annoy you. There—take the book; I have done with it:"—and as he tossed it down upon the table, he added, "I am sure if I had known that it would have produced this scene, I would not have asked to look at it at all."

"Frederick, dearest Frederick," cried Lucy, in an imploring tone, "I beseech you not to speak thus harshly to me. I can endure anything but that! Heaven knows I have worked hard—oh! so very hard, to make up the deficiencies caused by our expenditure; but I could not do impossibilities. I can assure you, dear Frederick, that myself and the child have lived off the humblest fare, in respect to those meals which we have taken alone. But if you require that money which we have left, pray take it—a few shillings will suffice for Freddy and me—Besides, there are my trinkets——"

"And there is my watch, too," added Lonsdale. "But all I want is just one of these:"—and he took up a sovereign. "You can keep the rest: but pray be economical, dear Lucy. For as I said just now, when our money is gone and those things are parted with"—meaning the jewelry—"I am sure I do not know where we are to get any more. And now when will you start? to-morrow or next day?"

"You tell me, dear Frederick," answered the wife, meekly and entreatingly, "that your regiment will not march for three days: would it not be better for us to remain here during the interval? for we have a week's rent to pay——"

"Oh! I think you had much better go to-morrow—or at least next day," interrupted her husband: because then you will be sure to be all settled at Middleton by the time I get there."

"To-morrow if you wish it," observed Lucy, as a thought struck her. "Shall you be able to pass this evening with us? as we shall perhaps start early to-morrow, before you can leave the barracks."

"I would if I could, dear Lucy," replied Lonsdale, now adopting a kinder tone and demeanour towards his wife, who displayed such readiness to do everything he suggested: "but the Colonel has given orders for us all to be in barracks at six o'clock to begin our preparations for departure—and it is now more than half-

past five. So you must really excuse me. Good bye, dear Lucy—good bye, Fred. I shall see you both again in a few days at Middleton. You can leave a note at the barracks to tell me where I shall find you."

Lonsdale kissed his wife and son with a transiently reviving tenderness of feeling; and for the moment he experienced a pang of remorse at hurrying them away from Manchester so suddenly, and at least three or four days before there was any real necessity for their departure. But as he recollected the motive which thus influenced him, he did not bid them stay—the sentiment of compunction was stifled within him—and he issued forth from their presence. The reader has doubtless understood full well that the alleged preparations for departure were merely an excuse to enable Frederick to join his comrades at the canteen; and the reason why he was anxious to hurry Lucy and Freddy off to Middleton, was that for the next two or three days he might enjoy a complete holiday, as he considered it to be—that is to say, ample leisure to spend his money in drink and tobacco, without the necessity of passing even a single minute with his wife and child.

But what thought was it that had so suddenly struck Lucy when she acquiesced in her husband's desire that she and their son should leave Manchester on the morrow? She had seen the low state to which their funds were reduced—she had heard Frederick remark that the jewelry would soon have to go—he had likewise charged her to be economical—he had manifested anger at their great expenditure—and she looked forward with a shuddering terror to the day when there should be no reserve fund in their possession, and when her toil would remain the sole source not merely of maintenance for herself and the boy, but likewise to furnish her husband with pocket-money, which she saw but too plainly had become indispensable. The necessity of eking out their little remaining means in the most parsimonious manner, had therefore presented itself to her; and the thought that had so suddenly struck her, was that instead of herself and little Freddy proceeding to Middleton by the coach, they might go by the waggon. To such an alternative poor Lucy could readily make up her mind; and she would have adopted it with cheerfulness, if her husband were but the same now that he was wont to be. But, alas! he was not. This was the first time he had spoken so angrily to her—the first time that she was smitten with a sense of undeserved cruelty at his hands; and it cut the unfortunate wife to the very quick. She knew also that he could not possibly have to make preparations three days before the removal of the regiment; such preparations would occupy but an hour, even if so much;—and bitter as was the pang that it cost her to say to herself, "Frederick is deceiving me," she could not prevent those words being whispered by her soul's secret voice. And then the money he had taken—a sovereign—a large sum from their little reserve,—what could it be for? Alas, alas! Lucy knew full well how it would be expended,

although at the time she had neither murmured nor looked aught in the shape of reproach or remonstrance. That noble-hearted woman—so loving, so tender, so devoted, and at the same time so magnanimous—was prepared to make any sacrifice for the husband of her soul's best and purest affections; but still—but still—Oh! she was only a woman after all, and she craved and yearned to be loved, and cherished, and treated tenderly in return!

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### MIDDLETON.

SHORTLY after Frederick left the lodging, Lucy went forth, accompanied by her little son, to take back the work she had in hand to the warehouse which had furnished her with employment; and she received the deposit, as well as the amount that was due to her. She next proceeded to make inquiries respecting the wagon and found that one would leave for the Midland Counties at six o'clock on the ensuing morning. She then returned to the lodging; but she could not help noticing that there were several soldiers of Frederick's regiment still walking about the streets, although it was now past seven o'clock and he had assured her that the Colonel had given orders for them all to be in their quarters by six. This was a confirmation, if any were needed, that he had deceived her; and yet she loved him as fondly and as tenderly as ever—although her confidence in his truthfulness had for some time past received so many shocks, and his very affection itself had undergone a visible diminution.

After little Frederick was in bed and had fallen asleep, Mrs. Lonsdale commenced her preparations for departure. These she performed with a heavy heart; for the circumstance of a removal to another place was the same as bidding her look into the future and wonder what her destiny might be at the next abode. Ah! but she trembled and shuddered thus to fling her mental vision forward: for the gloomiest images of evil—the direst forebodings, presented themselves to her view. And this removal too—whither was it to take her? Into the neighbourhood of those scenes which were associated with so many reminiscences that must inevitably excite emotions of a painful character. She lay down to rest that night with an aching heart and a throbbing brain; and as she pressed her son to her bosom, she wept over his sleeping countenance—wept tears of bitterest grief as she thought of the future!

It was a cold and misty morning at the end of March, when Lucy and little Freddy took their places in the wagon. Four or five dirty, ill-looking, coarse-mannered men and women were huddled together in the same receptacle; and their conversation, though not absolutely disgusting, was of a nature which Lucy but little liked to hear. As the day advanced, she went and walked—but not too far, for fear of fatiguing the boy; and thus again was she compelled to return into the society of her



disagreeable companions. The distance from Manchester to Middleton was about eighty miles: the wagon only went at the slow rate of about four miles an hour, exclusive of stoppages—and these were frequent. Altogether it took nearly four-and-twenty hours to reach the place of destination. We will not dwell upon the particulars of the route: suffice it to say that every possible discomfort was endured by poor Lucy—while on the other hand she did her best to make her son feel as little as possible the inconveniences and annoyances of this tedious, wearisome, ignominious mode of traveling.

It was about six o'clock on the following morning that the huge wain entered the town of Middleton. The streets were almost completely deserted: it was still too early for more than a few stragglers to be abroad. Cheerless indeed was the aspect of the sleeping town; and Lucy, who had given all her warmest garments to little Frederick to wrap him up during the night, was nearly perished with the cold. Indeed the chill had appeared to penetrate to the very marrow of her bones; her teeth chattered—her limbs were stiff—she felt entirely wretched. The wagon stopped at a public-house, which seemed to be one of the only places as yet open at that hour in the morning; and here Lucy was constrained to take up her temporary quarters. It was some time before a dirty, slipshod drab of a girl, who seemed but half awake, could coax the fire to light in the room to which she conducted Mrs. Lonsdale and Freddy: then it was another half-hour before they could be accommodated with a bed-chamber wherein to perform their ablutions; and quite another hour after that, before the slightest preparations for breakfast were made. However, at length the fire threw out a genial warmth—a somewhat more comfortable meal than could have been expected from first appearances, was served up—and Lucy smiled as cheerfully as she could, in order to prevent her beloved boy from catching the infection of her own low spirits. There was at least one source of gratification—the wearisome journey was over, and a saving of at least thirty shillings had been accomplished by taking that mode of conveyance.

After breakfast Lucy sallied forth with Frederick in search of a lodging. Nearly eight years had elapsed since she was last at Middleton: that was when she had accompanied her father on the memorable journey to Coventry on the occasion when he sought to compel her to wed Gerald Redburn. She knew Middleton well; every street was familiar to her; and as she now passed through those thoroughfares, they irresistibly revived the recollections of other times. She sought a poor part of the town: for she required but a humble lodging; and after some research she at length found what she wanted. A single room, ready furnished at half-a-crown a week, was thus secured in the dwelling of an old couple, and where there were no other lodgers. Lucy was on her way back to the public-house to pay her bill and have her boxes forwarded to her new home, when, as she was turning the corner of

a street—holding little Freddy by the hand, she encountered her father. But, heavens! how altered was he! His countenance bore the unmistakable signs of intemperance: his breath indicated that he had already taken a dram that morning. Though dressed in good clothes, his appearance was slovenly and dirty—his linen was soiled—he looked, in short, the confirmed drunkard.

A faint cry of mingled joy and suspense burst from Lucy's lips: for she did not instantaneously perceive how very much altered was his appearance—and the hope sprang up in her heart that she would not be rejected now. This hope, however, was blended with an apprehension that it might be otherwise. Mr. Davis gazed upon her with that kind of vacant stare which characterizes the drunkard; and she knew not from the nature of his look whether the hope or the fear would be realized. But now at a glance she perceived how changed he was; and bursting into tears, she seized his hand, murmuring, "Father—dear father—will you not forgive me?"

"No—never!" he suddenly exclaimed, snatching away that hand—retreating a pace or two—and stopping short again.

Little Frederick looked up into his mother's countenance with some degree of alarm: and when he saw that she was weeping, he clung to the skirts of her dress, begging her to come away—for he liked not the look of the individual whom she had called her father.

"No," continued Davis, stern and implacable: "the word *forgiveness*, Lucy, shall never be spoken by my lips. Years ago, at Portsmouth, I gave you the last chance: I shall not renew it. As you have made your bed, so you may lie in it. You might be a lady at this moment: what are you? You look pale and careworn: have you yet come to your right senses in respect to the course you took? Can you meet my eyes and tell me you are still happy with your husband?"

Lucy could give no response: the tears were streaming down her cheeks—her bosom was convulsed with sobs. She leant against a wall for support, with her son still clinging to her in affright.

"I understand that your husband's regiment is coming here in a few days," resumed her father; "and business keeps me in this town. Tell him, should he meet me, to beware how he ventures to address me: for I will spurn him as I would a dog. And you, Lucy—the next time we may chance to encounter each other, do you pass me by as you would any other stranger."

Thus speaking, Mr. Davis turned abruptly away, and plunged into the nearest public-house. Fortunately, the scene we have just described took place in a secluded part of the town; otherwise it was but too well calculated to attract disagreeable notice. For a few moments Lucy was unable to command her feelings. Oh! she felt that her circumstances were precisely those in which her father's forgiveness—if indeed he had anything to forgive—but at all events a reconciliation with him, would have been a source of comfort and solace! It was

not of his property that she thought at the time; she knew not indeed what his pecuniary position might be: it was only to be enabled to press his hand in kindness once more, and to be acknowledged as his child—it was only this that she had sought—and it was denied her! Poor Lucy, the cup of her bitterness appeared to be filled unto the brim; and no wonder was it that some moments elapsed ere she could subdue her feelings—no wonder was it that she remained unconscious of the tribulation into which the scene had plunged her little son.

But at length she did calm her emotions: she was aroused to a sense of her position in that street—exposed to the gaze of whomsoever might be passing; and hastily breathing a few consolatory and affectionate syllables to the boy, she hastened onward with him to the tavern where they had first put up. There she paid the bill, and despatched a porter with her boxes to the lodging she had taken. On returning thither, she busied herself in unpacking her trunks, letting little Frederick help her, so that the time should not hang heavy on his hands. She herself bustled about in order, if possible, to escape from the disagreeable reflections which kept crowding in upon her mind; but this was no easy task. When the arrangements were all completed and the little chamber was made to look as neat as possible, Lucy left Freddy in charge of the people of the house, while she went forth to make some requisite purchases, and also to seek for needlework at once, as she was resolved not to suffer any delay to elapse ere she began earning money. While she was in a grocer's shop buying some articles which she required, she became a listener to the following conversation that took place between the tradesman himself and an old female who was likewise making some purchases.

"Well, and so the case will really be tried at these Spring Assizes—eh, Mr. Mowbray?" said the old gossip: for such she evidently was.

"Yes, ma'am; and they will soon be on low," responded the grocer. "The damages, they say, are laid at two thousand pounds. Ah! it's a fine business for Fleecewell; and I am told he has got evidence that the Captain can't possibly rebut."

"It's a shocking thing," observed the gossip, shaking her head very seriously, "when a young married woman forgets herself in that way. Do you know, Mr. Mowbray, what has become of her?"

"I understand she is at home with her family—the Colyeynths at Oakleigh; and they all vehemently protest her innocence—that it was a little silly flirtation—nothing more."

"Oh! people always say that," observed the gossip. "Of course it's natural; one's father, mother, and sisters would not be pleading guilty on behalf of their accused relative. I am told that Mr. Davis himself has been stopping at Middleton ever since."

"Yes—and he's took to drinking quite horrid," responded the grocer. "Some say it's care and worry that drove him to it; but I'll be bound his lawyer will make the best of it.

Ah! Fleecewell is a sharp fellow; and if any practitioner can prove black's white, or white's black, to the satisfaction of a jury, he's the man."

By this time Lucy was served with what she wanted; and she made haste to get out of the shop. Indeed, she would not have remained there to hear as much as she did—especially when the discourse turned upon the drinking habits of her father—were it not that she had given her orders to the grocer before the colloquy commenced, and she did not choose to invite special notice to herself by hurrying abruptly away. But as she proceeded through the street, she felt bitterly afflicted that her father's intemperance should have become a subject of gossip and scandal; and she wished—oh! how devoutly she wished, that her sire would but be reconciled to her, that she might endeavour to wean him from the courses of degrading and debasing dissipation. Father and husband—both given to intemperance! Alas, it was a shocking reflection for this pure-minded and virtuous woman!

Being well acquainted with Middleton, she knew in what quarters to apply for work; and she had little difficulty in obtaining it. This was at least a source of comfort and consolation, as she was now ensured the means of living for her dear child and herself. On the following morning she left a note at the barracks that Frederick might receive it the moment he arrived at Middleton; and a few days afterwards the regiment marched into the town. It was late in the afternoon when Lonsdale made his appearance at his wife's lodging; and she flew into his arms with joy and delight. Little Freddy was also rejoiced to see his father; and his pleasure continued unabated—whereas that of poor Lucy speedily received a shock, when after the first effusion of feeling was over, she had leisure to observe her husband's appearance and saw that he was much under the influence of liquor. The tears came into her eyes; but quickly averting her countenance, she wiped them away, and began to tell him of her interview with her father. She did not however mention the brutal message which Davis had desired her to deliver to her husband; and she softened down as much as possible the cold-hearted asperity of his conduct towards herself. Passing rapidly on to a more agreeable subject, she told Frederick how she had promptly obtained work at a very fair rate of remuneration, and for a deposit of only a couple of pounds. She did not immediately inform him that she and little Freddy had traveled by the wagon; she was bashful in making known her self-sacrifice of comfort to the exigencies of their position; but the boy let it out—and Lonsdale was neither so tipsy nor so callous as to be altogether unmoved by this fresh proof of his wife's goodness. Indeed, he was stricken with a transient pang of remorse at his own past extravagances, and at the recollection that every farthing of the last sovereign he had taken from her had been expended in liquor. But the feeling soon passed away; and ere he quitted that evening, he devised an excuse to extract a few shillings from the small reserve that now remained in hand.



A few days afterwards the Judges on the Midland Circuit arrived at Middleton. and the Assizes were opened. It was a singular coincidence that the regiment to which Captain Redburn belonged should have been ordered to the very town where the trial was to take place, and at the very time it was to come on; but such was the fact—and he was therefore on the spot at this juncture. His father had already instructed an attorney to take measures for the defence; but there was little defence to make at all, beyond a bare denial of the charge for which the action was brought. The affair created a very great sensation, not merely in the town of Middleton, and the neighbouring villages of Oakleigh, but throughout the entire district, where the Redburn family were so well known. The case came on the first day of the Assizes. Sir Archibald Redburn arrived from the Manor early in the morning to assure himself that the attorney was doing the utmost which lay in his power for the defence, by retaining able counsel: but neither the father nor the son thought fit to be present in the court. Nor was Davis himself there; he remained at a public-house hard by, whiling away the time drinking brandy-and-water, and reading the occasional notes that Fleecewell sent him out by his clerk to make him aware how the case was progressing.

The counsel for the plaintiff commenced by observing, in a lachrymose tone and with lugubrious look, that this was one of those instances where the feelings of a fond, attentive and adoring husband has been outraged in a manner for which no pecuniary recompense could atone, but which nevertheless in an exemplary point of view demanded the heaviest damages. These damages were laid at two thousand pounds. The learned counsel went on to state that his client, Peter Davis, was a man who for a long series of years had held the responsible situation of land-steward or bailiff to Sir Archibald Redburn, a wealthy baronet whose name was well known in that part of the country. Mr. Davis had conducted himself in a manner to win the confidence of his employer, as well as the esteem of all his neighbours and friends. His moral character was unimpeachable; and in short he was a man endowed with a kindly disposition, a generous heart, and with the most honourable principles. Having been for some years a widower—during which period his daughter had married much below herself, and in a way calculated to afflict the heart of this kindest and best of fathers—he at length felt himself so lonely, so discousolate, and so forlorn in the solitude of his own home, that he had resolved to take unto himself another helpmate, who might be the partner of such little property as by his honest thrift he had accumulated, as well as a comfort to him while descending into the vale of life. Animated with this intention, Mr. Davis addressed himself to a young lady possessed of considerable personal attractions, and who was the daughter of Dr. Colycynth, an eminent medical practitioner who had long been settled at the picturesque little village of Oakleigh. Miss Catherine Colycynth—for that was the maiden name of the lady now

alluded to—was not only beautiful but also highly accomplished; and indeed she might be considered to move in a sphere above that to which Mr. Davis himself properly belonged. The learned counsel explained that if he dwelt thus emphatically upon the charms and attractions, personal as well as mental, of the lady in question—and upon the high standing and respectability of her family—it was for the purpose of proving how great a treasure his client, Peter Davis, had lost—seduced away, as she was, from his bosom by the vile machinations, the insidious artifices, and the detestable perfidy of the defendant, Captain Redburn.

This being a point in the learned counsel's speech where he meant to make a particular impression upon the jury, he paused and took a huge pinch of snuff, as if to compose the feelings that had been excited by the sense of those deep wrongs which his client had sustained and which the worthy barrister appeared to appreciate so fully.

"Well, gentlemen of the jury," he continued to observe, "under the most pleasing and favourable auspices did Peter Davis conduct Catherine Colycynth to the altar. There certainly was some disparity in their years; but the position in which my client was enabled to place his wife, was an eligible one for her,—inasmuch as she had no fortune of her own, and he was a man of some little substance. I believe, gentlemen, I may safely declare that the young lady found in my client a kind, endearing, and affectionate husband. Being beautiful as well as young, it was natural that the bride should be fond of embellishing her charms by means of the advantages of apparel; and to prove to you that Mr. Davis was anxious and willing to contribute to her happiness to the utmost of his power, he gave his wife free permission to obtain whatsoever articles of raiment, jewelry, and so forth, she chose to order from the tradesmen of Middleton. Indeed, the fond and adoring husband took delight in paying the bills as they were sent in. I will read to you, gentlemen, a few of these bills; and you may judge from their amounts that Mr. Davis was not the man to deny his wife anything in reason upon which her mind was set."

The learned counsel, having read the bills, proceeded to observe that two years and a half thus passed away in uninterrupted bliss, alike for the husband and wife; but at the end of this period the snake found his way into the grass growing around that cottage which had hitherto been a little paradise upon earth. Or, to drop the metaphor and to speak in plainer terms, Captain Redburn came into the neighbourhood. This gentleman, continued the learned counsel, was a Captain in the army—a person of most agreeable manners and fascinating appearance—embellished with all masculine graces—but who unfortunately used these advantages for the infamous betrayal of female virtue. Captain Redburn was the son of Sir Archibald Redburn, who had been already mentioned, and whose name (added the counsel) must be well known to every juryman sitting in that box. It was perhaps therefore unnecessary for him (the learned counsel) to inform this

enlightened, intelligent, and high-minded jury, that Sir Archibald Redburn was a very rich man—and that his son, the defendant in the present case, was the heir to all his possessions. The jury, therefore, when they came to consider the question of damages, need not be nice or delicate in the manner of awarding them; for the defendant was well able to pay—and this was a case which, by its unparalleled atrocity, the un-heard-of villainy which characterized it, the unscrupulous perfidies which had been used to seduce the plaintiff's wife from the path of virtue, required the heaviest damages that could be awarded. For when he (the learned counsel) informed that generous-hearted and magnanimous jury whom he had the honour to address—and it was an honour he should never forget—that his unfortunate client, Peter Davis, the plaintiff in this action, had been reduced from a condition of supreme happiness to that of a heart broken, forlorn, disconsolate man—crushed by the sense of bitter wrong—wounded in his honour—wounded in his heart—wounded in all his keenest susceptibilities,—when he (the learned counsel) told the jury all this, he felt assured that the verdict would be such as to award the full amount of damages which his unfortunate client claimed.

Having thus worked up the jury to that degree of mingled sentimentality and self-conceit which he considered most favorable to enable him to model their minds to his purpose, the learned counsel proceeded to explain the nature of the evidence which would be brought before them; and when he had done this—paying the highest compliment to Sarah Bodkin, the principal witness in the case—he wound up with a peroration depicting in such pathetic terms the mental agonies which his client, Mr. Davis, had endured ever since the discovery of his wife's infidelity, that two young females and an elderly one (the latter with a brandy-flask in her reticule) were so overcome that they were carried out of court in a state of insensibility. But all this while the unfortunate client was boozing at the public-house over the way, and chuckling at the prospect of sacking the heavy damages which Fleecewell's notes assured him he was certain to obtain.

Sarah Bodkin, the first witness who was called, deposed that she had been between three and four years servant-of-all-work in the household of Mr. Davis. She remembered a certain forenoon in the month of May, 1835, when Captain Redburn accompanied Mr. Davis to the cottage, and was shown into the parlour where Mrs. Davis was seated. Mr. Davis went to a cupboard in the back part of the premises to obtain some cider; and she (Sarah Bodkin) having to pass the parlour-door, which was ajar, heard Captain Redburn talking very familiarly with Mrs. Davis. She was so astonished that she was riveted to the spot—"quite struck all of a heap," as the saying was—and could not help hearing what followed. Captain Redburn said "he supposed he must not call Mrs. Davis by the familiar name of Kitty any longer;" whereupon she bade him stand upon no ceremony. Witness supposed that Mrs. Davis fancied that Captain Redburn, being the son of her

husband's employer, had a sort of right to address her in that manner. She (Sarah Bodkin) recollected another occasion when Captain Redburn called at the cottage; that was in the evening, and Mrs. Davis was alone, her husband having gone out to attend to some business. She (witness) again listened at the door, and heard Captain Redburn call Mrs. Davis "Kitty." Mrs. Davis begged him not to do so; she (as witness thought) had doubtless reflected that it was improper; but Captain Redburn persisted in his familiar mode of address, and plied her with flatteries, inasmuch that the poor lady suffered him to press her hand to his lips. Then Captain Redburn went on to abuse Mr. Davis in a very shocking manner; and by dint of persuasion he got Mrs. Davis to allow him to stay till midnight, he concealing himself behind the curtains in the parlour when Mr. Davis returned home. She (the witness) subsequently let Captain Redburn out of the house. Remembered another occasion—also in the evening—when Captain Redburn called. Witness again listened at the door, and again heard him ply the lady with flatteries. Also heard Captain Redburn kiss her: thought it was very improper, and went into the room under pretence of carrying a snuffer-tray: both of them looked very much confused. Listened afterwards at the door, and heard Mrs. Davis conjure Captain Redburn not to see her again. He soon after went away. On the following evening, she was sent to the Royal Oak, at Oakleigh, on some errand: a parcel was given to her for her mistress; and when she took it home, the lady found it was a present of a silk dress, a shawl, and a box of kid gloves sent by Captain Redburn. Witness had no doubt that this present, added to all the flatteries with which she had been plied, turned the poor lady's head and rendered her an easy victim to the insidious seducer. A fortnight afterwards she (the witness) was sent with a note written by her mistress to Captain Redburn at the Manor House. In the evening Captain Redburn called at the cottage. She (witness) did not immediately listen at the door again; she did not like to do so: but having occasion to go to the parlour to inquire whether her mistress would have supper served up, found that lady in Captain Redburn's arms. Mrs. Davis hurried up to her own room; and the Captain took his departure. When her master, Mr. Davis, came home, she told him all she knew: she thought it was her duty to do so. Mr. Davis seemed confounded at the intelligence; but presently flying into a dreadful state of excitement, he expelled his wife from his house.

When cross-examined by the counsel for Captain Redburn, Sarah Bodkin affirmed with the most unblushing effrontery that she had never received any money from the defendant—had never been set by Mr. Davis to watch his wife—would not have done such a thing—did not know what were the contents of the note that she took to the Manor House. If she had thought it was to invite Captain Redburn, would not have taken it at all. Was not desired by her mistress—on the last occasion that Captain Redburn was ever there, and when



Mrs. Davis went up to her room—to go and request that the Captain would take his departure at once. Was quite sure that he hurried away of his own accord, frightened at what had taken place. Had not been living ever since at Middleton upon money given her by Davis so as to be in readiness and on the spot for this trial: had lived upon her own savings, and had never observed to any one at Middleton that if Davis got heavy damages it would be a good day for her.

Witnesses were then called to prove that Gerald Redburn was a Captain in the army—that he was only son and heir of Sir Archibald Redburn—and that his father supplied him amply with money. The linen-draper of whom he had bought the presents sent to Mrs. Davis, was likewise summoned to substantiate this circumstance; and the tradesman perfectly well recollected the manner in which Captain Redburn had ordered the parcel to be addressed, and how he had left money to pay the carriage. The marriage of Peter Davis with Catherine Colcyinth was likewise proved; and thus terminated the case for the plaintiff.

The barrister who had been retained for the defence of Captain Redburn, was a man of great ability and well skilled in proceedings of this nature; but he had on the present occasion a difficult course to pursue, inasmuch as the materials with which he had to work were of a most meagre description. He commenced by ridiculing the pathos and lachrymose sentimentalism wherewith the opposing counsel had sought to invest the case of his client, Mr. Davis; and he then proceeded to answer in detail the various points put forward on behalf of the said plaintiff. But as it is not our purpose to extend this chapter of our narrative to an unnecessary length, it will be sufficient to glance rapidly over the most salient points of the speech for the defence. The jury had been told how great was the treasure which Mr. Davis had taken unto his bosom in the person of Miss Catherine Colcyinth: her personal charms, her mental accomplishments, and her eminent parentage had all been duly paraded to the attention of the court. But what were the plain facts, stripped of all metaphor and exaggeration? Here was a pretty-looking girl, the daughter of a humble village apothecary, with just a sufficiency of boarding-school education to render her vain, giddy, and conceited, without raising her to the standard of drawing-room elegance and perfection! And then the jury were told that this young person had been lured away from the path of virtue by such empty flatteries and trumpery compliments as a dashing officer was almost certain, under such circumstances, to utter. The extravagancies of the lady, her love for dress, and the recklessness with which she contracted debts to gratify that inclination on her part, had all been rendered available by forensic ingenuity, as proofs of a fond husband's indulgence: whereas witnesses would presently be produced to show how bitterly Mr. Davis had resented his wife's expensive tendencies, and how he had complained of the bills which had showered in upon him from the Middleton tradesmen. Nay, more—it would likewise be

shown that the lady had run thus recklessly into debt unknown to her husband in the first instance; and that it was only in consequence of certain rumours which reached the ears of Mr. Davis, that he was able to inquire into the matter and discovered the amount of liabilities thus entailed upon him. Therefore, under all these circumstances, was this such a wife whose loss the plaintiff could very much regret, or for which loss the heaviest damages should be awarded? and was it not the very acme of hyperbolic ludicrousness to represent the plaintiff as heart-broken and spirit-crushed on account of such a loss?

The learned counsel, after a brief pause, went on to say, "I have thus shown you, gentlemen of the jury, that even if Captain Redburn had seduced away the plaintiff's wife from the path of honour, the loss to the plaintiff himself of such a woman could not possibly be estimated at the amount claimed in this action. On the contrary, the very smallest coin in the realm would be an ample compensation. But on the other hand, I am positively instructed that nothing criminal ever did take place between Captain Redburn and Mrs. Davis; and to this he pledges himself as a gentleman and an officer. And here it is my bounden duty to observe, however unpleasant such observation may be to my client, Captain Redburn, that he is not altogether the irresistible Adonis which my learned friend has so eloquently sought to depict: he is not a man who, either by personal beauty or fascination of address, would be at all likely to say with Cæsar, 'I came—I saw—I conquered.' That there was some little silly flirtation between Mrs. Davis and himself, can scarcely be denied: and that perhaps Captain Redburn's views and hopes were not altogether strictly honourable or moral, must also be conceded. But the lady herself, though frivolous, vain, conceited, and extravagant, was not depraved. Doubtless it flattered that idle vanity on her part to have a young officer—a Baronet's son—dangling after her; especially as her husband neglected her most cruelly—passed his own time at a public-house—and was accustomed to return home at late hours in a filthy state of intoxication. But I repeat, Mrs. Davis was not depraved; and therefore she could not have been criminal. There was something artless in the very frivolity of her vanity—something of school-girl giddiness in the flirtation which she carried on; but beyond this her conduct became not reprehensible. On each occasion she repelled Captain Redburn's advances when they became too pointed. A kiss on the hand might have been snatched, but a kiss on the cheek was resented: and of her own accord did the lady on more occasions than one insist that Captain Redburn should leave her. Many of these facts could have been proven by the witness, Sarah Bodkin, had she chosen to speak the truth: but, thank God! gentlemen of the jury, there are laws in this country for the punishment of perjury. Now, with regard to the present sent from Middleton to Mrs. Davis, we do not attempt to deny the fact. It was sent by Captain Redburn in the hope of furthering his views: it was accepted by the lady in the same

unthinking giddiness which characterized her entire conduct."

The learned counsel commented in this strain for upwards of two hours on the various points of the evidence for the plaintiff; and he wound up a very ingenious and skilful speech with a terrific denunciation of Peter Davis himself, whom he represented as a man that had been a cruel and remorseless father—a neglectful, sottish husband to his second wife—the suborner of the wholesale perjury committed by Sarah Bodkin—and a wretch who had availed himself of the flimsiest circumstances, not merely as a pretext to get rid of this second wife, but also to enrich himself by the extortion of a large sum under the fiction of damages from the pocket of Captain Redburn nominally, but from the purse of Sir Archibald in reality.

Several witnesses were called for the defence. A woman, at whose house, Sarah Bodkin had lodged for some months past at Middleton, proved that she (Sarah Bodkin) had said that if Mr. Davis succeeded in his action it would be a good thing for her; and that, moreover, Fleecewell's clerk had called on several occasions and had brought her money. Several of the Middleton tradesmen proved how Mrs. Davis had contracted debts with them—how they had been compelled to write letters threatening to enclose the bills to her husband—and how, when Davis called upon them, he grumbled bitterly at his wife's extravagancies, enjoining them to give her no more credit. Other witnesses, chiefly tradesmen from Oakleigh, proved how Davis had frequented the Royal Oak; and how, even previously to Captain Redburn's visits to the cottage, he had been wont to complain of his wife's temper and express his deep regrets that he had ever married her.

The Judge summed up with clearness and impartiality; and the jury retired to deliberate. The trial had already occupied nearly the whole day: it was already six o'clock in the evening; and it was past seven before the jury could agree. At length they came back to their box; and the foreman delivered a verdict for the plaintiff—damages £1,500.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE POLITICAL MEETING.

ALTHOUGH the year 1836, of which we are writing, was not characterized by any very general agitation on the part of the industrious classes of the United Kingdom, yet there were certain districts in which the greatest discontent prevailed. This was especially the case in that Midland County where Middleton was situated; for the working classes of this town and all the surrounding districts were plunged into the deepest distress. It is not our purpose to enter into minute details on this head; suffice it to say that the industrious orders of Middleton, goaded almost to desperation by misery and wretchedness, were assuming a most formidable attitude. Large meetings had been held at different times for some months past; the speakers

had grown bolder and bolder in exposing the fraud which had been practiced upon the people by the Reform Bill of 1832; and resolutions were passed, expressive of a determination to have the full measure of those rights which belong to the entire community, but of which so large a portion, were unjustly detained by an arrogant and despotic oligarchy. It was in consequence of these meetings, and of this bold but manly and patriotic language, that Colonel Wyndham's regiment had been ordered to Middleton. Notwithstanding the presence of the soldiery, the agitation went on increasing; meetings continued to be held; but no threat of physical force was used by any of the speakers. In short, the working classes of that town and district were merely intent upon a great moral movement. They thought that if such assemblages were convened, at which firm but peaceful resolutions were passed, and petitions drawn up to be presented to the Legislature, an impression would be made upon that body, and it would be impossible for the Government of the country to ignore representations so respectfully made, or repudiate claims so peaceably urged.

In such circumstances was it that the regiment to which Lonsdale belonged took up its quarters at Middleton. A few weeks elapsed without any opportunity arising to afford a pretext for Colonel Wyndham to accept the coercion and repression of the working classes. He was, however, in frequent communication with the local magistrates; and to them he signified his readiness to act rigorously and peremptorily whenever he should be called upon. The strictest injunctions were issued against any of the soldiers attending the meetings of the working classes; and threats of severe punishment were held out in case of disobedience.

At length the wished-for opportunity appeared to present itself for Colonel Wyndham to exhibit his zeal on behalf of the cause of tyranny and oppression. It was at the close of the month of July, in the year of which we are writing, that a great meeting of the working classes was advertised to be held in the immediate neighbourhood of Middleton, on a particular Monday morning. Specific instructions were transmitted from London to Colonel Wyndham, enjoining him how to act; but these were kept altogether secret until the Sunday immediately preceding the day on which the meeting was to be held. On that Sunday three troops of a cavalry regiment stationed at Coventry, entered Middleton and were quartered at the barracks. The regiment to which Lonsdale belonged, paraded on that morning as usual, and was marched to church. On returning from divine worship, the regiment was drawn up in the barrack-yard, and formed into a square, the better to hear the address which Colonel Wyndham was about to deliver. He spoke to this effect:—

"It is understood that a number of seditious, discontented, and evil-disposed persons will assemble to-morrow outside the town, under pretence of petitioning the Government for the redress of alleged grievances. These persons have really no grievances to redress; and their



real object is to excite terror and alarm, and perhaps to pillage and plunder. Now, my men, it may be that you will find yourselves called upon to act; and if so, I am very certain you will do your duty. You will be kept in barracks for the rest of this day; and after dinner you will all take and rough-sharpen the points of your bayonets. The non-commissioned officers will rough-sharpen their swords; and I tell you, my men, that if to-morrow you do have to use your weapons, you are not to be overnice in the matter. I hope none of you are imbued with those revolutionary and detestable doctrines which vile demagogues are so assiduously disseminating; but if any one of you should be heard giving utterance to such sedition, we will see if the cat-o'-nine-tails will not thrash it out."

Thus ended the Colonel's speech: the regiment retired to its quarters; and after dinner the process of rough-sharpening the bayonets commenced. The object was that those murderous weapons should inflict jagged wounds, which from their dreadful ghastliness would be all the more difficult to cure. A number of grindstones were provided for the purpose: and thus were the soldiers, after having attended church in the morning to hear the doctrines of Christianity preached, compelled to make these hideous preparations for the massacre of their fellow-countrymen. It became rumored through the regiment that the three troops of cavalry which had arrived on the same day, had received similar orders: namely, to rough-sharpen their swords; and therefore it appeared as if something very serious were intended for the occasion of the meeting of the working classes. Now, we have previously stated that democratic opinions were very rife in Lonsdale's regiment, and that the most liberal of the weekly newspapers then in existence was extensively read and circulated amongst the soldiers. They therefore did experience considerable sympathy with the objects of the forthcoming meeting; and to those objects they wished all possible success. Consequently, it was with the most painful feelings that the soldiers pursued the horrible work of sharpening their bayonets. Gladly—most gladly, would they have disobeyed the mandate: but Sergeant-Major Langley went round to assure himself that the work was done fully and effectually. The Colonel himself, and the generality of the officers likewise, gave their supervision. The older privates shook their heads gloomily and wore serious countenances; the younger ones whispered amongst themselves, and testified their abhorrence of the fearful proceeding as much as they dared. But none felt more bitterly on the subject than Frederick Lonsdale. His countenance was ashy pale; and there was a strange light glimmering in his eyes. He longed to break out into open rebellion against a mandate which he considered to be repugnant to human nature and hateful in the sight of heaven. He felt that when he had enlisted as a soldier, it was in the belief that it was for the purpose of performing manly duties, and not of doing a coward's work: and he looked upon

the order which had been issued, as one calculated to degrade and dishonor the British soldier down to the level of a mere hireling cut-throat. In such a state of mind, it cannot be wondered if Lonsdale held back when his turn came to approach the grindstone. At that moment his very life hung by a thread. Had he thrown down his arms and refused to sharpen his bayonet, the offence would have been mutiny; and considering his past punishments, the penalty would have been death. Then what would become of his wife and child? All these considerations swept through his mind in a moment, for he was thoroughly sober on the occasion;—and exerting an almost superhuman effort over his feelings, he approached the grindstone. At that instant Sergeant Langley's voice thundered in his ears.

"Now then, you fellow, what are you hesitating about? I knew deuced well that you were sure to hang back. A scoundrel like you is enough to corrupt the whole regiment. I haven't forgot what I heard about you at Oakleigh at the time you enlisted—how you were notorious for the seditious doctrines you propagated. Come, sir, work away at the grindstone; and if it's necessary for the sake of our blessed laws and glorious constitution to make an attack upon those vagabonds and rascalions who are to meet to-morrow, I shall keep a sharp eye upon you. Go on, you scoundrel—grind away—and take care you do your duty!"

And Lonsdale *did* grind away, because he was compelled to do so. The dissipated career which he had led for some time past, had not stifled all generous feelings in his soul. Though rendered somewhat callous and indifferent—*too* callous and *too* indifferent—towards his excellent wife and beautiful child, yet the edge of his political feeling was by no means blunted; indeed, it had lost none of its keenness; and hence the strength of his emotions on the present occasion. When he had done sharpening his bayonet, he hurried off to the canteen and drank deeply to drown the bitterness of his feelings.

On the following morning the working classes of Middleton were seen hurrying to the spot appointed for the meeting—a large open space just outside the town. Numbers from all the adjacent villages and hamlets had likewise been pouring in to the same focus from an early hour in the morning; and remoter places—even large towns—within a circuit of twenty miles, had contributed to swell the multitude assembling on the present occasion. Thus, by the time the proceedings commenced, there were at least ten thousand persons gathered together at the appointed place: but all were inspired with the same peaceable view, yet feeling that they had a duty to perform, and resolving to accomplish it boldly and manfully. There was not a single individual in that immense assemblage who had come provided with any offensive weapon; the idea of a physical force demonstration was altogether out of the question; and the leaders of the working classes had adopted every possible precaution to avoid

furnishing the local magistrates with a pretext for calling out the military force.

The proceedings of the meeting commenced. The weather was magnificent: the sun was shining bright in a cloudless sky; and a gentle breeze mitigated the intensity of the summer heat. A wagon served as a platform for the chairman and the speakers; and all around this stage were assembled the honest sons of toil—ten thousand in number—who had flocked thither to ratify with their suffrages the protest that had been drawn up against the slavery in which they were held, and to support the petition which was *humbly* to implore the concession of their rights. An impartial and honest-minded observer would have beheld, at one single glance thrown over that crowd, sufficient to convince him that there must indeed be an immensity of wrongs to complain against, when those who were able and willing to work could obtain no work to do, and when their wretched garments and the ghastly signs of famine upon their countenances but too plainly indicated the amount of the sufferings they had endured and were still enduring. On the outskirts of the crowd there were several women, some with babies in their arms: misery and starvation were stamped upon the countenances of these unfortunate creatures; and their very look served as a sad and painful corroboration of the impression first made by the appearance of those on whom they were dependent for support. The infants whom these women carried, seemed to be pining away as if through downright want; and altogether the aspect of that multitude was such as to proclaim trumpet-tongued the colossal wrongs of the working classes.

A chairman having been chosen, the proceedings commenced, when half a dozen persons on horseback were descried emerging from the town. The rumor that the Mayor and other magistrates were approaching, circulated like wild-fire throughout the assemblage; and all eyes were riveted upon the chairman, expressive of the suspense that was felt until he announced the policy which was to be adopted by the people's leaders on the occasion. In a calm, firm voice, the chairman reminded the meeting that it was the privilege of Englishmen to assemble for the purpose of discussing grievances and petitioning for redress—that such were the objects of the present assemblage—that these objects were fully proven by the documents to be submitted for the approbation of the meeting—that as they were all unarmed, and therefore incapable of mischief even if they possessed the inclination, it would be the most outrageous exercise of tyranny on the part of the authorities to prevent the continuation of the proceedings—and that therefore it was his (the chairman's) duty to counsel the meeting to remain firm until the close of the business, and under no circumstances to display a dastard quailing, or to concede an ignominious submission.

This speech was received with a tremendous outburst of applause; and even as a dead body may be galvanized, were those pale, sickly, emaciated forms inspired with a thrill of patri-

otic enthusiasm in the consciousness that *their* was the cause of right and justice, and that they were only performing a duty to themselves, their families, and the millions of their fellow-workers and toilers throughout the land. Scarcely had that outburst of ten thousand voices died away, when the Mayor, accompanied by his brother-magistrates—all on horseback—rode up to the outskirts of the meeting. In a peremptory and even brutal manner, did the Mayor call upon the chairman to order the assemblage to disperse. The chairman replied, respectfully but firmly, that it was a legal meeting, assembled for a legal object; and he must decline to obey the mandate issued. Thereupon the Mayor retorted that there was an Act of Parliament, passed in the time of Charles II, and still extant, forbidding more than fifty persons to assemble at a time in any one place. The chairman rejoined that this was not generally believed to be the law of the land; and he reminded the Mayor that this functionary himself had frequently called meetings of the gentry and middle-class for political purposes, and at which large numbers were assembled. The Mayor flew into a passion, answering that what the gentry and the middle class might do, was quite another thing; but that the rabble and ruffian must not be permitted to disturb the public peace. At this insolent speech the Mayor was saluted by an outburst of indignation, which continued long, and might to a certain degree appear menacing, though it was nothing more than he deserved—for he himself had provoked it. In the midst of the confusion, the yelling, the shouting, and the vociferating that pealed forth from all sides, and which the chairman was utterly unable to suppress, the Mayor read the Riot Act. He himself was a coward in his heart, as all ruffian-bullies are: he was afraid of the storm which his own insolence had raised; his countenance was white as a sheet—his hands trembled so that he could scarcely hold the document from which he was reading—his voice was hurried, but low, tremulous, and broken—and in the midst of the din which was growing louder and louder, the words he uttered could not be heard a dozen yards off. Scarcely had he finished, when his horse, which had for some minutes been showing symptoms of increasing restlessness, became unmanageable; and swerving abruptly round, trampled a poor woman with a babe in her arms under its hoofs. The child was killed on the spot—the woman had her thigh fractured—and the terrific screams which she sent forth added to the confusion and even horror of the scene. The horse galloped madly away, the terrified Mayor clinging with frantic energy to its neck; and his brother-functionaries followed him at the utmost speed of their own animals.

Cries of rage and yells of execration burst forth from those of the crowd who were nearest to the scene of this fearful accident; and the rumor of what had happened spread like wild-fire throughout the assemblage. As is invariably and unavoidably the case in such circumstances, the report became exaggerated the further it flew; so that the general impression



which it created, was that the Mayor had with purposed brutality spurred his horse into the midst of the meeting, and had trampled down several persons, killing a child and severely injuring its mother. The confusion soon became immense. Men, previously goaded to the very verge of desperation by famine, by wretchedness, and by the sense of bitter wrong, were now driven to a state bordering on frenzy. And yet all their indignation, so reasonable and so natural, was venting itself merely in clamorous demands for justice: no positive menace was used—no specific threat was thrown out: nor did the members of that meeting make any movement as if to proceed elsewhere to commit an outrage or wreak a vengeance.

The poor woman and the dead child were borne to a neighbouring cottage; and the chairman, having succeeded somewhat in lulling the storm, was about to explain that the Riot Act had been read, and to put it to the meeting whether it would still continue its proceedings, or disperse—when there was a sudden cry of "The military!" All eyes were instantaneously reverted towards the town; and true enough, the soldiers were seen issuing thence, from two distinct parts. The dragoons, with their sabres drawn, were advancing at a trot: Colonel Wyndham's regiment was simultaneously bearing down in double-quick time. The persons composing the meeting could not conceive it possible that an attack was really intended; and with a few exceptions, they stood their ground. But the utmost confusion and clamour prevailed: women were screaming, as they fled away from the outskirts of the assemblage: with wild locks, bonnets falling off, and dishevelled hair, they were crying for fathers, and husbands, and brothers, to come away likewise. Some females remained with the meeting, clinging to those who were their natural supporters. The men were everywhere offering suggestions and recommending different things to be done; and thus in the confusion which prevailed, nearly all were leaders and none became followers. The din was immense: and yet there was nothing really menacing in the aspect of the assemblage, tumultuous though it had grown.

The general impression still was that the troops would come to a halt when on the outskirts of the meeting: but as they drew near the terrific word "*Charge!*" was heard ringing through the air; and the next moment the dragoons, bursting into a gallop, poured down on the unarmed multitude. At the same time Colonel Wyndham's regiment charged likewise, with fixed bayonets; and the scene all in an instant became hideous and horrible beyond the power of description. The wildest shrieks and cries—the most awful yells and groans were mingling with the shouts of alarm and vociferations of rage. The people fled in all directions; and the word "*Halt!*" suddenly stopped the carnage which had already commenced on the part of the dragoons and the infantry. In a few minutes the entire space was cleared, save and except of the two *corps* of military, and some twenty or thirty unfortunate persons who had been slain or grievously wounded by the charge. Amongst these victims were five or six women,

two of them having children in their arms. Over the adjacent meadows the members of the dispersed meeting might be seen running for their lives: but after a little while some few of them began to retrace their way slowly, with the horrified apprehension that they had lost those who were near and dear to them in the murderous charge of the military. As for the commanding officers of these *corps*, they felt satisfied with the blow they had struck: the "riff-raff and rabble" were dispersed; and according to their idea, an example of terrorism had been afforded which would not very speedily be forgotten. They marched back their troops into the town, and ordered them to keep to their barracks for the rest of the day.

Gloomy were the looks—sombre indeed was the demeanor, of most of the private soldiers of Lonsdale's regiment, when on reaching their quarters, they were no longer under the eyes of their officers. They spoke but little: the state of their feelings was exhibited rather in their countenances than by words. Lonsdale was the prey to emotions which he had perhaps never experienced before, much though he had gone through, and much anguish of mind though on former occasions he had known. He was in the front rank of the leading company at the time of the charge; and his bayonet had inflicted a ghastly wound upon a poor working man. He had been compelled to do what was termed "his duty." Under the *regime* of military discipline it was impossible for him to act otherwise. When once in the serried rank, he could not hang back: he could not even lower or elevate his musket, nor turn the point of the bayonet aside, so as to avoid thrusting it into a fellow-creature:—the weapon had its exact place in the bristling array, as he himself had his place in the rank. A man was on his right—a man was on his left hand: shoulder against shoulder were they thus marshalled; and between the muskets of these two was his own bound to appear in due parallel. By these means is it that the regular order of the entire rank is kept: and thus the reader will comprehend that there was no possibility of flinching; but that the soldiers of a corps, a company, a regiment, or a brigade, constitute but individual items of a machine, of a lesser or greater magnitude, which when put in motion must proceed and act according to the impulse given. It would be as unjust and absurd to blame Lonsdale for what he did on that occasion, although his bayonet had pierced the body of a victim, as to blame one of the wheels of a locomotive which, when propelled by the engineer, dashes into another train, scattering death, and horror, and disaster around. Need we add that in the evening Lonsdale repaired to the canteen, and there drank deep to drown the sense of the feelings that were goading him to desperation? And this was the case likewise with many and many of his comrades:—all indeed who had any money to spend, were but too glad to have recourse to liquor in order to escape from the dark and dismal impressions left upon their minds by the scene of the morning.

On the following day, as Lonsdale—with a head aching from the previous night's debauch,

and a heart aching at the remembrance of the carnage—was wending his way towards the little lodging, he noticed that the working men whom he passed looked upon him, some with unrestrained horror and aversion, others with a mournful commiseration. Those who were least acquainted with the imperious tyranny of that discipline which rules the private soldier as with a rod of iron, naturally held these soldiers themselves responsible for the hideous deeds that had been done: but others who were better instructed upon the subject, knew that the private soldier was naught but a mechanized and automaton-made being, whose position was but too well calculated to excite a mournful pity. But such pity as this was so galling to Lonsdale's mind as the looks of aversion, loathing, and abhorrence which he encountered elsewhere; and feeling a kind of madness in his brain, he was about to rush into a public house to obtain liquor, when he recollected that he had spent all his money on the previous evening at the canteen. He sped on to the lodging. With a sort of wildness he burst violently into the room, where Lucy was occupied with her work, and where little Frederick was studying his lessons; and his first demand was, "Have you got any money?"

"Money, my dear Frederick?" she repeated, meekly and timidly, while her looks showed that she was frightened at his manner.

"Yes—money," he reiterated, with a sort of brutality in his accents. "Come now, don't stand staring at me in this manner——"

Lucy burst into tears, while she hastened to put forth from her pocket a few shillings upon the table—all the money she could command. Her husband snatched them up, and was rushing away, when she sprang forward, and catching him by the arm, murmured in a voice broken with convulsing sobs, "Has anything happened, dear Frederick? why are you thus? Not one kiss? not one kind word? not even so much as a look at your dear boy?"

"Lucy," answered her husband, abruptly closing the door which he had half opened, and turning as suddenly round towards her, "I feel as if I were going mad! You know what happened yesterday—you know that there was murder done under colour of the law outside the town? And I, Lucy, I—your husband—the father of that boy—was one of the assassins! Yes: you may turn pale—Oh! even if you too loathe, abhor, and hate me, it will be but natural! But that hand which you have pressed in tenderness—that hand which your lips have touched—that hand which at times has smoothed down the hair upon the pure brow of that boy—this hand it is which is now stained with human blood! Oh, my God, Lucy! it is enough to make me curse myself—to make me curse the world—to make me curse—But heavens! what is the matter?"

And as he uttered these last words, he sprang forward to catch his wife, whom he suddenly perceived to be falling: but he was not in time to save her—and she dropped heavily upon the floor in a dead swoon. He raised her in his arms—he placed her upon the bed—he hastened to sprinkle water upon her countenance,

which was pale as marble. Care and anguish had for a long time past been making it thus: it now looked like the face of a corpse—but at countenance once so eminently beautiful! Little Frederick was crying bitterly; and in a paroxysm of excruciating remorse for his past conduct, Lonsdale embraced the child; and bending over the inanimate form of his wife, he covered her cheeks also with kisses. While he was still lavishing these caresses upon her, she came back to consciousness: she felt the warmth of her husband's kisses—a thrill of surprised delight galvanized her from head to foot. Winding her arms about his neck, she strained him to her bosom,—and once more—but only for a few moments—Lucy Lonsdale was happy.

No: this happiness lasted but a few moments for the feeling of remorse which had smitten the husband, quickly passed away when he saw that his wife had recovered. It was as if the tenderness of romance melted all on a sudden at the renewal of the commonplace aspect of things. Lucy gently and timidly asked whether he could not remain and spend an hour—only one short hour—with herself and little Frederick. But Lonsdale had at the time an insatiate craving for the artificial stimulant of strong drink; and glibly uttering an excuse, he took his hurried departure, with his wife's money in his pocket. And, as we have before said, it was all the money she possessed at the time. This was Tuesday: she would have no work done till Saturday—no more money to receive till it was done. The cupboard contained enough bread—and nothing else—for that day's meals: but on the following day Lucy was compelled to take some article of jewelry to the pawnbroker's, and raise the means for supplying herself and the boy with food. Oh! for herself she cared not: she would have submitted to any privation sooner than have paid that visit to the pawnbroker! But the child could not be suffered to know the pangs of hunger likewise; and it was for him that she did it.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### STILL DOWNWARD.

TIME wore on—weeks and months passed away—and the year 1836 was drawing to a close. Frederick Lonsdale grew more inveterate in his dissipated habits—more thoroughly confirmed in his evil courses. He seldom now paid a visit to the lodging, unless it were to obtain money; and as the price of work was falling, and even work itself was not always to be had, poor Lucy's means of supplying her husband's extravagances grew narrower and narrower. One after the other had the articles of jewelry been pledged: they were now all gone; and the proceeds had been swallowed up by Lonsdale at the canteen. Frequent were the minor punishments to which he was subjected; and every time he thus endured the



penalties of his intemperate habits, he heard himself pronounced "incorrigible."

And Lucy toiled on—toiled on as much as she was able; that is to say, whenever she could obtain work. But poverty was stealing into the little home,—stealing insidiously, but steadily and surely, as poverty does steal: for it seldom strikes one down of a sudden. Instead of pouncing upon its victim at once, it circles round and round about—plays with its object—angles with its feelings—tortures it as a cat does a mouse—but gradually and gradually hems it around into a narrower compass, till it begins to compress it as the snake does the writhing victim it has enfolded in its loathsome coils. Thus does poverty proceed by means of slow tortures: but each successive one is more keenly felt than its predecessor—as the nearer one approaches to the horrid regions of the North, the sharper and more poignant is felt each gust of the ice-wind. Alas! sad were the privations which Lucy had begun to experience, but which she kept as much as possible as her own share,—still providing to the utmost of her power for her well beloved boy. Though work was fluctuating and precarious, she could have still managed—she could have rubbed on—she could have eked out the slender means it produced, were it not for the constant demands her husband made upon her scanty purse. As delicately as she could, did she make him aware of the difficulty of maintaining her little home: but he did not choose to understand her, so long as there was a shilling or sixpence forthcoming to be spent at the canteen. Sometimes he would take from her even the last small coin upon which she had reckoned wherewith to purchase bread for her son; and then she would have to go and implore credit at the baker's or else part with a garment at the pawnbroker's.

But even this was not the sum of poor Lucy's sorrows; it was not the total of her afflictions. The time came when she was forced to tell her husband that she had no money. Then he demanded savagely whether she was growing lazy and did not work? She replied, with the tears streaming down her cheeks, that she had been a week without work, as the warehouse had none to give her. Lonsdale insisted that she should go and demand back the deposit of two pounds which she had left. Now for the first time in her life—or at least towards her husband—did Lucy manifest a certain degree of spirit: she positively refused to withdraw that deposit—it was the only condition on which she could hope for work again; and work had been promised her for the ensuing week. The deposit was, so to speak, the little capital that supplied herself and her child with bread. Lonsdale grew furious, and rushed out of the house. He himself went straight to Lucy's employers and demanded the return of the money; but they, having heard things to his disparagement, declined to hand the amount over, without a written order from his wife. He sped back to the lodging, and at first besought her to sign such a paper. No: much as it pained her to refuse, she could not—she dared not. He grew violent: she fell upon her

knees, beseeching him not to press her. He had recourse to coaxing again; half of the money would do—but still Lucy would not. Ten shillings, then—five shillings—any portion of the money: but Lucy knew that it would be utter ruin—hopeless misery—starvation—and finally the poor house; and still she refused. Lonsdale burst away from her in a violent passion; and for the rest of that day the unfortunate woman remained plunged in a depth of grief from which not even the affectionate endearments of the boy would raise her.

This violent scene was speedily followed by others of a similar character. Lonsdale would eagerly watch when his wife had work, knowing that as Saturday came round he would obtain the means for a debauch. He would even waylay her as she returned from the warehouse, and would compel her to hand him over a considerable part of her earnings. He thought not of the long weary hours which poor Lucy had toiled and toiled to obtain that pittance whereof he plundered her in so large a part. He thought not of the privations that she and their son would have to endure for want of the shillings that he expended in drink. He marked not that the face whose beauty had once been to him the object of pride, and love, and joy, had become pinched, and care-worn, and haggard—that the fine contours of that form which he had been wont to admire, were suffering and shrinking from the same causes—that his poor wife was losing the strength as well as the robustness and the hues of health, beneath the weight of oppressive toil and merciless poverty. Nor did he observe that the boy who had once been his solace and delight—the object of his tenderest care—whom he had dandled upon his knee—and who had been accustomed to fly into his arms, was likewise growing pale and losing the joyous spirits natural to his age, and that he slunk back in fear and trembling whenever the much altered father entered the room. All this Lonsdale saw not: or if he saw it, he recked not for it; and it failed to make a salutary impression on him.

And now as time wore on, sadder scenes took place in that little lodging. Again did the brutal husband—for such indeed he had now become—renew the demand that the deposit should be withdrawn from the warehouse. Again did Lucy resist. Lonsdale, craving for liquor—ready to sacrifice everything in order to obtain it—cared not what might happen for the morrow so that he could obtain money for the day. He threatened—he stormed—he menaced—he made use of language such as Lucy had never heard issue from his lips before, and which she shuddered to reflect upon after he was gone. But she would not consent to deprive her son of bread in order that the father might have drink. The scene was terrible—and, Ah! terrible too in its close: for the infuriate Lonsdale struck his amiable and excellent wife. She sank down upon a seat like one annihilated: she could not believe the evidence of her own senses. He had struck her—Oh! after all she had done for him—after all the love she had cherished towards him, he had struck her! and in the presence too of the boy,

who, rushing towards her, threw his little arms about her neck, sobbing and weeping piteously! Lonsdale sped from the room with remorse rankling in his heart like the sting of a scorpion or the venomous tooth of a snake.

But this remorse was only transient. Similar scenes succeeded; and it soon became no uncommon thing for the husband to beat his unfortunate wife. The people of the house would at length put up with these disturbances no longer; and the reader may conceive how bitter was poor Lucy's humiliation, when she was one day told that she might look out for another lodging, "as they would not have a drunken blackguard of a soldier constantly coming to create a riot there." Oh! that her own Frederick—the object of her constant and unwearied love—the man whom she still loved and cherished notwithstanding all his brutality towards her—should have sunk down to such a degree of degradation as to be thus spoken of! Vividly to poor Lucy's mind came back those scenes of happiness which she had known at Carlisle, in Finsbury, and in Calais—when her husband was loved and respected by all who knew him—and when he loved his wife and his child, and respected himself. Was it possible that he could have so changed? Lucy felt as if all the past were a dream: it appeared as if it never could have existed, to be succeeded by present circumstances. Or else these present circumstances themselves were a dream, and she was under the influence of a hideous nightmare? But, no—alas! no: it was all indeed too terrible a reality. She knew that it was so: she could not blind herself to the fact. Here were a thousand causes to convince her that it was all real—horribly, hideously real. She knew it when she looked in the glass and beheld her own altered appearance; she knew it when she looked at her son, and through her scalding tears beheld him like one pining away, she knew it by the blows she had received from her husband, and which had left bruises on her shoulders and her arms: she knew it by those cutting words uttered by the people of the house and which still rang in her ears. Yes: she knew it—and she felt it all too: she felt the poverty that was around her—that was staring her in the face—that was hemming her in on every side—that stood like a lean, lank, sharp-visaged spectre ever before her: she felt it in the thousand and one reminiscences of the past with which the circumstances of the present contrasted so dreadfully, so dismally.

But it was necessary to remove to another lodging; and in such removals poverty finds a more wretched home on each occasion, until at length it is left without a home at all. But to this point Lucy had not come: it was for the present only a removal—a removal to a cheaper and consequently a more miserable chamber—a mere attic in a house where there were other lodgers. But still, in that same spirit of thrift, and cleanliness, and tidiness which had ever characterized Lucy, and no portion of which she had left behind her when being dragged over the rough places of the world's pathway, the poor creature endeavoured to make this wretched attic as comfortable and as neat as

possible. And still she continued to toil with her needle; and still she did her best to support herself and her son; and though their garments had by this time become scant and shabby, yet their extreme propriety and cleanliness rescued them from appearing downright mean and sordid. For a moment—and only a moment—Lonsdale was shocked when he first entered this new lodging: for he was no stranger to the cause that had driven Lucy from the previous one. But anything like a feeling of remorse on his part was now as transient as it was rare; and as he succeeded on the occasion in extorting a shilling from his poor wife, he went away with exuberant spirits. The man had by this time become thoroughly embroiled; even those fine feelings which had animated him on the occasion of the military crusade against the working classes, had ceased to exist; and if the same scene were to be enacted over again, he would have mercilessly bayoneted a hundred of his fellow-creatures, provided that he had previously been well plied with beer or spirits. And not only the last remnants of the generous sentiments of other times were thus passing away—but his health was failing, and his good looks were disappearing. He often spat blood—his lungs were affected—he was troubled with sores and pains in the loins: for the effects produced by the two severe floggings he had sustained were aggravated by his intemperance. The man was rapidly becoming, alike in mind and body, the wreck of his former self; physically and mentally was he being destroyed. And the process was now suicidal: it was his own work, as was the bankruptcy of his character also.

We may here incidentally observe that since the trial which took place in the Spring, Lucy had heard nothing of her father; and she had never once met him in the streets of Middleton—nor had she noticed her husband on any occasion mention that he had fallen in with Mr. Davis. She often wished to ascertain what had become of him: she more than feared that he also had grown inveterate in his drinking habits; and even amidst her own manifold cares and sorrows, she still found time to think affectionately and sympathizingly concerning her parent. The year was drawing to a close: Christmas was at hand—a sad and mournful Christmas for poor Lucy—when accident furnished her with the information that she had so much longed to obtain. One day, when making some small purchases at a shop, she overheard two persons—likewise customers there—talking of her father. They did not know who she was, and therefore went on speaking. From what passed between them, Lucy learnt that Mr. Davis had removed to Coventry immediately after the trial—that he inhabited a well-furnished and comfortable dwelling in that town—that Sarah Bodkin was his housekeeper—and that he had almost completely given himself up to drink. It further appeared that with the damages he had obtained, together with the property he previously possessed, he was in very comfortable circumstances, and might have occupied a highly respectable standing in society, were it not for his drunken habits. Lucy



returned to her attic-lodging with a heart heavier, if possible, than when she had issued forth. Her father was well off—he could succour her if he chose in this period of her poverty; but she feared—or rather she *knew*, how useless it would be to write to him, and how inveterate he was against her. These considerations naturally and irresistibly forced upon her mind the thought of the misery that had resulted from the marriage she had contracted; and yet she could not wish the past undone so far as that marriage was concerned. As for a single scintillation of regret that she had not espoused Gerald Bedburn, Lucy was too pure-minded to entertain such a feeling. Besides, that the marriage had thus resulted in unhappiness for herself, could not for an instant be accounted for as a retribution for any disobedience of which she was guilty in respect to her father; under the circumstances which existed at the time, it was no disobedience at all; and the union would have been a happy one, had not her husband been subjected to such cruelty and remorseless persecutions. But Oh! if she could only make her peace with her father, even though he might not succour her in her poverty, it would still be balm to her soul. She wrote to him; and the letter remained unanswered. This was another dagger plunged into the heart of poor Lucy.

Christmas Eve came; and she wondered, sadly and mournfully, whether Frederick would dine with her on the following day. She had saved up a few shillings to purchase the Christmas dinner: she had toiled hard and stinted herself sorely in order to make this little saving; for she thought that if her husband could once again be induced to sit down comfortably with his wife and son at the table, and if that dear boy's heart should also for this once be gladdened, it would still be an oasis in that dismal arid desert constituting the world of her present experience. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon—and Lucy had waited indoors until now, in expectation that her husband would come, so that she might assure herself whether he intended to dine with them on the following day. But as he had not yet made his appearance, and it was already dark, she resolved, with a subdued sigh, to go forth and make her purchases. She had put on her bonnet and shawl, when Lonsdale's well known step was heard ascending the stairs; and he entered the room. He was half tipsy; and his first demand was whether Lucy had any money. She never told him a falsehood, and therefore would not on this occasion; but frankly admitted that she had five shillings, with which she was going to buy the Christmas dinner—and she besought him to come and partake of it.

"You can't go out at this hour," he said, his manner and tone all of a sudden becoming kind and affectionate, notwithstanding his semi-inebriety: "it's quite dark, and there are a good many bad characters abroad in the street just now. To be sure, I meant to come and dine with you to-morrow; and I hope we shall be comfortable together. Let me go and buy the things for you."

A misgiving smote Lucy's heart: but not for an instant would she betray it. So she gave her husband the money; and away he went, promising to return in about half-an-hour. But the half-hour passed—and he re-appeared not. It grew into an hour—then another hour went by—then another—but still no Lonsdale. Lucy's misgivings were now completely confirmed. He had taken the money without the intention of coming back: it would all go in strong drink; and she—the poor wife—and the boy might starve at home! She had not another farthing: she had not a garment which she could dispense with, to raise money upon. She looked in the cupboard: there was a loaf of bread—and naught besides. There was not even any tea, nor sugar, nor milk. Neither had she any coals; and the weather was of a bitter chill. With a throbbing brain and an anguished heart, she sat down and endeavoured to work: but she could not. This last act of her husband struck her as something so heartless—savouring indeed of such cold-blooded cruelty—that it was well nigh overwhelming. It was not for the dinner she cared: a piece of dry bread would suffice for her: but Lonsdale had robbed *his son* of that dinner which Lucy had promised, and of which the poor boy, child-like, had been talking all the week. She wondered how her husband could possibly have had the heart to do it. Vainly, in the natural generosity of her soul, did she endeavour to find a palliation for his conduct: but she could not.

And thus that Christmas Day was passed, in wretchedness and sorrow for poor Lucy. Her husband did not make his appearance. He knew there was nothing *there*, either to eat or to drink, that would suit *his* palate. There was no fire in the grate—the room was like an ice-well—the snow was falling—and Lucy could not even take little Freddy to church or to walk. All day long she held him on her lap, wrapped up in a shawl, and pressed to her bosom, to keep him warm, while she herself was shivering with the cold. Bread and water was their only fare: but the bread which Lucy ate was moistened with her tears.

A week passed; and Lonsdale did not venture into his wife's presence. She dared not seek him at the barracks: for on two or three previous occasions, when she had done so in alarm at his protracted absence, he had been most violent in his reproaches, and had positively ordered her never to adopt such a course again. But on this occasion, when the seventh day came and Frederick did not appear in the afternoon, Lucy grew so seriously frightened that she resolved at any hazard to go and inquire for him. But scarcely had she thus made up her mind, when he entered the room, and instantly began framing an excuse for not having returned on Christmas Eve. He said that he had been jostled and robbed in the street, and that he did not like to come back. Lucy made no reply; and Frederick seeing that he was not believed, flew into a rage, endeavouring to pick a quarrel. But, as usual, he had it all on his own side: for his gentle wife bore everything meekly, and retorted nothing an-

grily. She however entreated her husband to compose himself, and not address her in such harsh terms, as she would not for the world give him any offence. He told her that if she wanted to make it up with him, she must do him a service; and then he revived the oft-repeated demand for the deposit. But Lucy refused. Frederick gave her a violent blow; this time it was on the face—and it felled her to the floor, where she remained senseless.

When she came back to consciousness, she found her little boy clinging to her neck and crying bitterly. She said and did all she possible could to soothe him, though her own heart was well nigh ready to burst.

"Papa has taken away the things," observed little Frederick, when he was somewhat tranquilized.

"What things, my dear child?" inquired Lucy, not comprehending the boy's meaning.

"Your work, mamma," was the response.

"Ah!"—and Lucy started as if a serpent had stung her. She understood it all in a moment; and a sense of utter ruin—harrowing and horrifying—stuck to her soul. In a fearful state of excitement she put on her bonnet and shawl; and leaving little Freddy in charge of a female lodger, who occupied the adjacent attic, she rushed off to the warehouse. There she received the confirmation of her worst fears. Her husband had taken back the half-finished work which she had in hand—he had *forged* her name to an order for the repayment of the deposit of two pounds—and he had obtained the money. Lucy's distress was piteous to a degree; and she besought that the work might be given back to her. The people of the warehouse had little feeling for the sorrows of those who toiled for them: it was with them a pure business-consideration; they made it a rule of the establishment never to give out work without a deposit; and this rule could not be departed from. Moreover, Lonsdale had been to the warehouse on several occasions, and had deported himself in so violent a manner that he had become an object of terror. The clothiers were therefore far from sorry at the occurrence of an incident which, by putting an end to their connexion with Lucy, would guarantee them against her husband's visits in future.

Half-distracted, the unhappy woman wandered back to her miserable home. As she passed through the streets, her brain appeared to reel: it seemed as if frenzy were in it. She could not compose herself to deliberate reflection. The last plank which separated her from the waters of destruction, appeared to be gone: the last straw at which she had clutched to save herself from drowning, was torn from her grasp. And, Oh! her boy—her beloved child—her dear little Frederick—what was now to become of him? Great God! what was to become of them both?

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### DEEPER DOWNWARD STILL.

EVERY day throughout the ensuing week—from morning till night—did Lucy wander from shop to shop, imploring work. Yes: it was not asking—it was imploring. For the love of Heaven, give her work, that she might obtain bread for her boy and herself! If they would but trust her with work, she would return it punctually—she would execute it well—she cared not how little she was paid, so long as she could earn something. It was but work that she asked for; it was but the bread of industry that she craved: for mercy's sake give her work! Ah, but could she pay a deposit? No—she could not: but she was honest—there was not a stain upon her character—she had never done a wrong thing—she would perish sooner. It was all very well and all very fine: but a deposit of money was required—the honor of a person could not be taken as a pledge—it was worth nothing, even at a pawnbroker's. Well, but she was not altogether a stranger at Middleton: Oakleigh, which was at no great distance, was her native place; she was the daughter of Mr. Davis who for so many years had been Sir Archibald Redburn's land-steward. This too was all very well and all very fine: but it was not a money-deposit. And moreover, how came it that Mr. Davis, who was known to be well off, left his daughter in such a strait? They were very sorry—these people to whom she applied—but they could not assist her; they must beg to decline; and really they were so busy, they could not attend to her any longer!

In this manner did poor Lucy experience disappointment after disappointment—rebuff after rebuff: in this way was she treated. She was poorly clad; and no one would trust her. Yet it was but work that she entreated, and prayed for, and almost went down upon her knees to implore. But in this Christian country she could not obtain that work, unless able to guarantee her integrity by a money-surety. Oh! if those to whom she addressed herself, had but studied well that beautiful countenance—still beautiful, pale and careworn though it were,—if they had examined those traits to which palor itself imparted a still more delicate and touching interest,—they surely would not have conceived a suspicion injurious to Lucy's honesty? But they had no time—those people of this busy money-making country—to examine physiognomies: and even if they had, they would still have fallen back upon the stern, cold, worldly-minded calculation that looks were not deposits.

Thus a week passed in vain and futile wanderings from warehouse to warehouse—from shop to shop. And always without success! Throughout this week Lucy had managed to obtain bread for her child, and an occasional crust for herself; but this was done only by parting with some of her own raiment—that raiment which she could so ill spare in the midst of the deep cold winter! The week's rent became due; with the utmost difficulty it was paid: but the direst penury now stared the un-



happy mother and the poor boy in the face. She felt the icy hand of Want lying heavy upon her shoulder; it was like the hand of the dead, sending a glacial chill piercing and penetrating to the very marrow of her bones. Thoughts of suicide would creep into her mind; and though she shuddered with the direst horror, and endeavored to shake them off, still they would come back again; and there were moments when she feared that her reason was abandoning her—that she was going mad. And during this week of harrowing bitterness—a week of excruciating anguish—a week through which she had dragged herself she scarcely knew how—she saw nothing of her husband. But at length he came back again; and sorrowfully—despairingly—but with no more reproach than was conveyed in her looks and her accents—she told him all she had suffered, and all that little Frederick had suffered likewise. For a moment he appeared shocked—but only for a moment: and then he told her the best thing she could do, would be to go to Coventry and see her father; for he had heard that Mr. Davis was living there in good circumstances. She replied, amidst torrents of tears, that she had vainly written to him some time back, and had received no answer.

"Well," said Lonsdale, in a sullen mood and with sulky accents, "I am sure I don't know what you are to do. For my part, I was obliged to take that money—I wanted it—and of course there is no harm in using one's wife's name. Come, what on earth are you whimpering for like that?"

"Good heavens, Frederick!" exclaimed Lucy, with a sudden access of wildness; "how can I help weeping? Did you not know that when you went and received that money, you were taking the very bread out of that poor boy's mouth?"

"Oh! by Jove, if you are going to reproach me, I sha'n't stay here;"—and the brutal fellow, starting up from his seat, placed his hand upon the latch.

"For God's sake, Frederick, do not leave me thus!" implored the agonizing Lucy. "Oh! I forgive you for what you have done! Do but consult with me what I am to do——"

"Forgive me indeed!" he said, turning fiercely round upon her: "that's a pretty way to talk to your husband. If you do it again, I will make you remember it:"—and he clenched his fist to strike her.

"Oh, papa!" cried the boy, rushing between them: "do not beat poor mama—pray do not!"

"Get out, you little brat, you!"—and Lonsdale gave the child a brutal kick: having done which, he quitted the attic.

"My poor boy," murmured Lucy, snatching little Frederick up in her arms, pressing him to her bosom, and covering him with her kisses and her tears; "I could have endured anything but this! Oh, it is too much! it is too much!"—and then she continued to sob and weep, and moan and lament, as if her heart would break.

This shocking scene took place at about two o'clock in the afternoon; and Lonsdale, on evening his wife's lodging, walked in a mood of desperate sullenness towards the barracks. He

had called upon Lucy in the hope that she would have managed to get over the difficulty wherein he had plunged her, and that he should have found her able to give him some money. The disappointment he experienced threw him into that humor of brutal sulkiness which he had displayed. The two pounds he had obtained from the warehouse, had melted away at the canteen and other places; for whenever he had money, he invariably treated his comrades in a profuse manner until it was gone. He had committed a deep debauch on the previous night: he now felt an earnest longing for a stimulant to cheer up his spirits which were suffering a painful reaction. His mind was in a morbid state: he recked not what became of him.

He was proceeding through the street in this mood,—wondering where he could obtain credit for liquor, or how he could raise any money to procure some,—when on passing round a corner, he ran against Sergeant-Major Langley.

"Now then, you awkward scoundrel!" exclaimed Langley: "why the deuce don't you see where you are going? But most likely you did it on purpose, you blackguard thief!"

"How could I do it on purpose?" demanded Frederick gruffly; "since I did not see you till we ran against each other? If you can see through a brick wall, I can't; and I may just as well say that you ran against me on purpose——"

"What the deuce means all this impudence?" vociferated Langley, his countenance becoming purple with rage. "But I suppose you are tipsy as usual?"

"No, Mr. Langley—I am not," replied our hero quickly. "I take heaven to witness that I have not had a single drop of beer or spirits all day."

"Well, it's something to plume yourself upon, no doubt," rejoined the Sergeant-Major with a sneer: "for you have become the most drunken blackguard in the whole regiment."

"It's precious fine for you to speak in this manner," retorted Lonsdale, his blood boiling with rage, "when you know very well that I picked you up one night, in the barrack-yard at Manchester, in a beastly state of intoxication."

"Hold your tongue, you insolent scoundrel!" interrupted Langley, with vehemence.

"Scoundrel yourself!" cried Frederick passionately: "yes—the most hellish of scoundrels—a scoundrel of the blackest dye—a scoundrel of an infamy that transcends all description—this is what you are, Mr. Langley—and I defy you!"

"What's the matter here?" demanded Captain Redburn, who came round the corner at the moment. "Is this beggar insulting you, Langley?"—and he flung a look of the supremest contempt upon our hero.

"Beggar!" echoed Lonsdale, now rendered perfectly infuriate: and in the ungovernable madness of his rage he struck Redburn a blow which sent him staggering back several paces.

"Ah! he has struck me!" exclaimed Redburn. "Langley, take him to the guard-house!"

"No—nor yet a dozen of you!" vociferated Lonsdale, who was literally in a state of frenzy:

and drawing his bayonet at the very instant that Langley was rushing towards him, the point wounded this individual in the arm.

A crowd was speedily collected—several other soldiers came up at the moment—and Langley ordered them to take Lonsdale into custody. The unhappy man, smitten in an instant by a sense of the awful position in which he now stood, dropped his bayonet—pressed his hand to his brow—and staggering back, as the images of his wife and child rose up vividly before him, murmured in a voice of deepest agony, “My God, my God! what have I done?”

He offered no farther resistance—but was confined as a prisoner to the barracks, where he was at once placed under close arrest.

In the course of the evening Lucy was wending her way through the streets, in the direction of that warehouse for which she had first of all worked, and whence her husband had received back the deposit. So desperate was the condition to which she was reduced, that she had resolved to make one more appeal in that quarter. But on arriving there, she was at once told “that it was of no use to come bothering any more, for that nothing could be done for her.” She actually fell upon her knees, imploring work: but her prayer remained unheeded—or rather, elicited only a stern command that she would take herself off. Heart-broken, and wringing her hands as she passed along the streets, she was retracing her way towards the lodging,—when by the light streaming from a shop-window, she was suddenly recognized by a respectably-dressed woman, about five-and-twenty years of age, who exclaimed, “Good heavens! it must be you, Mrs. Lonsdale!”

“Martha?” said Lucy, with a feeling of joy at thus hearing a well-known voice and once more beholding a friendly countenance; and then they shook each other by the hand most cordially.

Martha’s tale was soon told: she had married a respectable and steady young man, named Selwyn—the son of a small farmer, living about twenty miles from Middleton and a dozen miles from Oakleigh: she had two children—and was very happy and comfortable. Poor Lucy could not answer for herself in the same cheerful strain; and as she never gave vent to any complaint against her husband, the words of explanation she did give to Martha, were few and guarded. But the tears ran down her cheeks, as she admitted she was in great distress; and Mrs. Selwyn manifested the sincerest sympathy.

“I am hastening back to the friend’s house where my husband is waiting for me,” she said; “for I have been out to make some purchases, and have been detained longer than I thought—so that I am afraid he will be uneasy. We are going home the first thing to-morrow morning; but as we are occasionally at Middleton, I shall have the pleasure of seeing you again. Perhaps you will write and tell me where I can find you? I can never forget, my dear Mrs. Lonsdale, how kindly you used to behave towards me; and I hope you won’t be angry, if I beg you to accept this little trifle.”

While she was thus speaking, the kind-

hearted Mrs. Selwyn had been manoeuvring to take some money out of her purse under cover of her shawl, so that Lucy might not observe what she was doing: and hastily thrusting the amount into our heroine’s hand, Martha hurried rapidly away, not so much to escape Lucy’s acknowledgments of gratitude, as through fear she might decline to accept of any pecuniary succour at all. Poor Mrs. Lonsdale held the money mechanically, but remained standing for some minutes on the spot where Mrs. Selwyn had left her: for this meeting with one who had known her in better times, and who was the confidante of her earliest love for Frederick, had vividly conjured up manifold reminiscences but too well calculated to touch her deeply. But, Ah! she had money in her hand—she might now purchase bread for her son—providence had not altogether deserted her. The sum which Martha had thus forced upon her, was five sovereigns—a perfect treasure—a veritable mine of wealth, in the estimation of our heroine, who but a few minutes before had been racked by the sense of utter destitution and imminent starvation. Invoking a blessing upon the head of the generous friend whom she had just encountered, Mrs. Lonsdale sped on to the baker’s shop where she was accustomed to deal, and which was in the close vicinity of the house where she lodged. As she was waiting while the baker gave her change for one of her gold pieces, she could not help noticing that the man looked at her in a peculiar manner—not impudently, but with an air of mingled surprise and commiseration: and as he stooped down to his till, Lucy distinctly heard him mutter to himself, “Surely she can’t know of it?”

“Know of what?” cried Mrs. Lonsdale eagerly: and she was instantaneously smitten with the presentiment of something wrong. The baker, perceiving his inadvertence, looked both sorry and confused: but his manner only increased Lucy’s apprehensions. “For heaven’s sake tell me what you meant?” she said: “has anything occurred to my dear boy during my brief absence?”—and there was the wildness of terror in her looks.

“No—it is not that,” stammered the baker. “Indeed, I am very sorry I should have said a word—but it slipped out unknowingly, as one may say—”

“You are driving me mad!” cried Lucy with frenzied vehemence. “What is it? what is it? Has anything happened to my husband?”

“Well, poor creature—I don’t like to distress you—but—but—your husband is in some little trouble—I really thought you must have heard of it—and yet I saw that you hadn’t—”

“Now, what is it?” said Lucy, speaking in a low deep voice, and nerving herself to receive some terrific disclosure. “You see I am calm—I am collected. For God’s sake do not keep me in suspense!”—but her calmness was most unnatural, and a thousand wild distracting thoughts were sweeping through her brain.

“I hope it won’t turn out as serious as I have heard,” said the baker: “but I am told—now pray don’t make yourself too unhappy—I am told that your husband—I have no doubt he was provoked to do it—”



"What has he done!" asked Lucy, the words coming hoarse between her chattering teeth: and she was shivering with direst apprehension from head to foot.

"I say I have no doubt he was provoked to do it—or else he never would have lifted his hand against his officer——"

A hollow groan came from Lucy's throat; and she sank down in appalled dismay and black despair upon a seat that was near. The baker summoned his wife to bring a glass of water; but when it was proffered to our unhappy heroine, she only shook her head with a sadness so deep, so drear, so dismal, that the baker and his wife were much affected. They invited her to step into their little parlor and compose herself: but though she heard that they were speaking, she caught not the sense of what they said: it was a mere droning in her ears, as if she was experiencing the sensations of drowning. But all in a moment she started up, as if galvanized by a sudden access of frenzy; and flying precipitately from the shop, rushed along the street like one demented.

In an incredibly short space of time, she gained the barracks. There she made enquiries of the sentinel at the gate; and the tale she had already heard was not merely confirmed, but now received additions so fearful, that the unfortunate wife felt as if she must scream out in her wild affliction, and thus pass into a state of raving madness; for not only had her husband struck Gerald Redburn, but he had drawn his bayonet against Sergeant Langley; he had wounded him in the arm—he had defied the military authorities to arrest him—in short, he had been guilty of a complication of offences, the penalty for which was *something* whose bare contemplation made her brain reel, filling it with frenzy, and her soul with awful horror. She besought leave to see her unfortunate husband; but the sentinel assured her that it were useless to apply for such permission that evening; and Lucy dragged herself away from the barrack-gate, feeling that the cup of her miseries was now, not merely filled to the brim, but was running over.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### A SCENE AT THE MANOR-HOUSE.

THREE days had elapsed since the events recorded in the preceding chapter; and Captain Redburn rode over one morning—as indeed he was frequently accustomed to do—to the Manor House. Sir Archibald, Lady Redburn, and Aunt Jane were sitting together in the drawing-room, when Gerald made his appearance.

"Well," said the baronet, after some observations on indifferent matters had been exchanged, "what about the court-martial and that fellow Lonsdale?"

"Oh! it came off yesterday," responded Gerald in a careless manner, as he ran his fingers through his hair; "and as a matter of course the rascal's days in this world are numbered.

You see, he had no real defence to make: for when he began quarrelling with Langley, he positively declared and took heaven itself to witness that he had not been drinking——"

"And if he had," observed the baronet, "it would only have been an aggravation of his offence. Whenever culprits are brought before me, and plead drunkenness for anything they may have done, I always tell them that——"

"Never mind what you tell them," interrupted Aunt Jane, who, instead of her wonted cold sneering bitterness, spoke with a strange petulance. "I dare say you don't offer the poor wretches any consolation: you seem to have a delight for the stocks and the treadmill."

"The stocks," remarked the Baronet, shaking his head in evident regret at the increasing desuetude of what he considered to be a time-honored institution, "have nearly gone out of vogue, and I must confess I am sorry for it. It was a most salutary punishment; and if my advice had been taken in certain quarters——"

"But Gerald hasn't finished telling us about the court-martial, my dear," said Lady Redburn; "and of course we are all interested in it: for that wicked fellow Lonsdale always had a spite against our Gerald—and for that very reason I have ever been convinced that he would come to no good. Well, Gerald—and so he had no shadow of a defence to make?"

"Oh! he tried to say a great many things, and bring a great many charges against me; and he wanted to talk a great deal about the tyrannies, as he called them, to which he had been subjected. But of course all those things were extraneous, and had nothing to do with the subject of the court-martial. In respect to the accusations themselves, there was really no defence. You see Langley deposed that as he was walking along the street, Lonsdale hustled him on purpose; and when Langley gently and kindly remonstrated with him upon the impropriety of his behavior, the scoundrel became terribly abusive. Of course Langley concluded at once that he must be tipsy, or he would never act in that manner: so he said to him in a conciliatory tone, 'Come now, Lonsdale, I don't wish to get you into any trouble: but you are in liquor, and the best thing you can do is to go straight to your quarters and keep yourself quiet.'—Now this was kind enough, wasn't it?"

"Yes—if Sergeant Langley may be believed on his oath," interjected Aunt Jane; and her pale countenance appeared to be more ghastly pale than ever at this moment.

"Believed on his oath?" ejaculated Gerald: "and why the deuce shouldn't he be? Besides, there was a great deal of what he alleged that I was able to corroborate: for coming up at the moment, I heard Lonsdale abusing Langley like a pickpocket,—calling him all the scoundrels he could possibly lay his tongue to—scoundrel *this*—scoundrel *that*—scoundrel *the other*——"

"And perhaps if he had distributed the same compliments elsewhere, he wouldn't have been wrong," again interjected Miss Redburn, with a degree of bitterness that had something actually fendish in its rancor as she bent her eyes on Gerald: and even these eyes were not at the

moment glassy and dead as was their wont—but they were suddenly animated with the glare of a reptile.

"None of your nonsense, Aunt Jane," said Gerald contemptuously.

"Dear me, don't stare at him in that way, Miss Redburn," cried her ladyship to her sister-in-law. "You positively frighten me! Sir Archibald—Sir Archibald—"

"Well, my dear—leave Jane alone—I see her—never mind her. Come, Gerald, go on with your narrative. You were telling us," observed the Baronet, "that you came up at the moment when Lonsdale was abusing Langley—"

"Yes—calling him all the scoundrels in the world. Of course I was preciously annoyed at such a breach of discipline; and I interfered. I dare say I did call Lonsdale some name: but that's common enough on the part of us officers towards the privates—and nothing is thought of it. So, then Lonsdale struck me a blow that almost knocked me down; and drawing his bayonet, he made a desperate assault on Langley. If it hadn't been that some other soldiers came up at the time, I think murder would have been done. Well, doesn't the scoundrel deserve anything he may get for it? That's what I want to know."

"Of course you have done your best to murder him," said Aunt Jane.

"Murder him!" ejaculated Gerald. "What the deuce do you mean by such an expression as that?"

"I mean just what I say," responded Aunt Jane: and still was her countenance absolutely ghastly—still were her eyes shining with a sinister, reptile-glare, that was enough to make one shudder.

"Well, I'll be hanged," exclaimed Gerald, feeling an unaccountably disagreeable sensation stealing over him, "if I can make you out at all to-day, Aunt Jane—"

"Oh! don't mind her," interrupted the Baronet, "she means no harm—you know it's only her way. By-the-bye, is Langley's wound dangerous?"

"Not very," answered the Captain. "The bayonet pierced right through the fleshy part of the arm—"

"Pity that it did not pierce deep down into the heart," said Aunt Jane—"aye, and not only of Langley—but likewise of another whom I could name."

"My dear, my dear," interposed the Baronet angrily, "this is too much—I really can't permit—"

"Who cares for what you either permit or gainsay?" demanded Miss Redburn, now turning her sinister looks and her corpse-like countenance towards her brother.

"She's mad—stark staring mad," whispered Gerald to his father: "there's no doubt about it—and I really, really am afraid she means to do me a mischief."

"Pooh—nonsense!" said the Baronet. "My dear sister," he continued, addressing himself to Miss Redburn, "perhaps you had better retire a little to your own chamber—I don't think you are very well to-day—"

"Well, indeed!" ejaculated Aunt Jane, with a fiercer bitterness than ever before. "What should make me unwell?—Do you know—eh! no—you don't—and no one here knows. But I know—aye, and there is another not far off, who knows likewise! Yet no matter—no matter!"—and now she looked as if frenzy were seizing upon her brain, and there was such a strange wildness in her air—such a cat-like fury in her gaze that she was absolutely frightful to behold.

At this moment the door opened, and Mr. Arden was announced. The reverend gentleman, upon entering the room, immediately perceived that something strange had taken place; because his first glance, falling upon Miss Redburn, showed him that horrible expression of countenance which we have just endeavored to describe, and which still lingered as the rector made his appearance. Mr. Arden gave a start—stopped short—and was seized with a strange confusion, mingled with alarm: but almost instantaneously recovering himself, he said, "Perhaps I am intruding—I am afraid that I am."

"What nonsense, Arden!" exclaimed the Baronet: "you know perfectly well you never are an intruder here. Why should you think so?"

"I suppose because he saw Aunt Jane showing off," observed Gerald, with a spiteful look at Miss Redburn.

"Dare not to insult me, you miserable hound!" was Miss Redburn's fierce ejaculation then turning towards the rector, she said in a milder manner, but still with considerable bitterness in her accents, "We were talking just now about the state of my health; and I asked them what they knew of my being well or unwell? But you, Mr. Arden, are acquainted with my secrets—are you not? Yes: you have been my spiritual comfort!"—and it was a wild and ironical laugh that Aunt Jane sent forth ringing through the room.

"By heaven, she really is mad—she must be mad!" said the Baronet aside to his wife. "I do positively think that Gerald was right when he said so. See how strange she looks!"

"Are you talking about me?" cried Aunt Jane: "are you talking about me, Archibald? If so, say it out loud—speak it boldly—let Mr. Arden hear—But whatever you do, I would advise you to prevent this son of your's, —for I will not call him *nephew*,—from insulting me again; or I will make him repent it. Dog, I could kill you!"—and terrible was her look as she flung those words at Gerald Redburn.

"Well, I certainly shan't stand this any longer," said the Captain, again becoming frightened: "it is carrying the joke too far;"—then in an under tone to his father he added, "If you don't lock Aunt Jane up, she will do somebody a mischief."

With these words he was about to leave the room, when Lady Redburn called him back, saying, "Don't go, Gerald. Surely you can remain and pass the day with us?"—then perceiving that Aunt Jane had become tranquil once more, and had sented herself in a window-recess, her ladyship added, "I don't think you



had finished telling us about that reprobate—what's his name?"

"Frederick Lonsdale you mean," said Gerald, returning to his seat. "Have you heard the news, Mr. Arden?"

"Yes," replied the clergyman. "I—I have indeed heard—that—that—I mean that the unfortunate man——"

"Has been condemned to death," added Gerald, finishing the sentence for the clergyman, who appeared to stammer so that he was utterly at a loss for words to finish it for himself.

But scarcely had Captain Redburn thus spoken, when Aunt Jane sprang up from the window-recess with a wild and terrific cry as if seized with the pangs of some mortal agony; and advancing three or four steps towards her nephew, with an expression of diabolic fury in her countenance, she all in a moment dropped senseless upon the carpet, as if shot through the heart. Sir Archibald,—who, as we stated on a former occasion, was the only one in the family that had any regard for Aunt Jane,—sprang forward and lifted her up; while Lady Redburn almost tore down the bell-pull in summoning assistance.

"She is dead—or she is dying,—all sense has abandoned her!" exclaimed Sir Archibald, as he carried his sister to a sofa. "Lady Redburn, my dear, come and attend to her—Gerald, get some water—hand me that bottle of salts, Arden—quick, quick!"

But the rector moved not from his chair: his countenance was ghastly white—he seemed stricken with consternation and dismay—and he gazed in strange vacancy upon the inanimate form of Miss Redburn, whom her brother had placed upon the sofa. At this moment several domestics, alarmed by the furious pealing of the bell, rushed into the room; and amongst them was Miss Redburn's own maid. She saw that her mistress was in a deep and dangerous swoon, and at once entreated that medical assistance might be summoned. She and another female servant administered restoratives: but they produced no effect; and they accordingly decided upon conveying Miss Redburn up to her own chamber, where they might loosen or take off her garments, and at all events be less constrained in the treatment that was requisite. But again did Miss Redburn's maid enjoin that medical assistance should be summoned.

"Yes—we must send for a doctor," cried Sir Archibald, as his sister was being borne from the room. "Paul," he added, addressing one of the footmen, "run down into the village and fetch up Colycynth!"

"Colycynth, my dear?" said Lady Redburn. "Can you think of such a thing after all that has taken place?"—and she glanced significantly towards her son: for he remembered that Mrs. Davis, the bailiff's wife, was Mr. Colycynth's daughter.

"No matter, my dear!" exclaimed the Baronet impatiently: "my sister cannot be suffered to die for want of medical aid. Run, Paul—run, and fetch up Mr. Colycynth directly."

Paul and the other male domestics quitted the room; and now Sir Archibald noticed the

pale countenance and strange looks of the Rev. Mr. Arden. This gentleman, having somewhat recovered from that consternation into which Aunt Jane's thrilling shriek and immediately ensuing swoon had thrown him, had risen from his seat with the air of a man who struggles to throw off a sense of terror or other oppression which is on him: but his features were still deadly pale—his eyes were wild—and his entire aspect denoted a mighty inward trouble.

"Why, what ails you, Arden?" exclaimed Sir Archibald: "are you going to be ill too?"

"I am sure it was enough to frighten Mr. Arden, or any one else out of his wits," said Lady Redburn. "For my part, it has made me so nervous and ill, I don't know what to do."

"Nervous and ill!" observed Gerald: "it was enough to make the devil nervous and ill. For my part, I shall go and take a turn in the grounds and smoke a cigar: for, as you may suppose, I am not very anxious to meet old Colycynth. Though I have all along declared, and shall ever persist in declaring that his daughter is as innocent as an angel so far as I am concerned, yet I know very well the Colycynths regard me as the cause of all that trouble and exposure—or whatever they call it; and so I shall get out of the way while the doctor is here."

Having thus spoken in his usual flippant manner, Captain Redburn left the apartment; and lighting a cigar, he strolled forth into the garden in order to avoid the chance of meeting Kitty Davis's father.

We must here inform the reader that Mr. Colycynth was not the regular medical attendant at the Manor Hou-e. It happened that both Sir Archibald and Lady Redburn enjoyed excellent health, and seldom required any medical aid at all: but when they did, a physician was fetched from Middleton. On some occasions Mr. Colycynth had been called in to attend any of the servants who might happen to be ill: but these instances were likewise rare—and when they did occur, the village surgeon received no more attention or civility at the Baronet's mansion than any tradesman who called there on business. The reader has been already informed that the Colycynths were not considered to be good enough to visit at the Manor House; and therefore, whenever the surgeon was called in on an emergency, he was never asked to the drawing-room—never invited to take any refreshment—and indeed he was treated just about as well as the horse-doctor who administ-red boluses to any of the animals in Sir Archibald's stable.

But to continue the thread of our narrative. It happened that when Paul the footman reached the village, he encountered Mr. Colycynth in his gig: and on making known his business, he perceived that the surgeon suddenly became serious, and hesitated what to do.

"I can assure you, sir," said the footman, "that Miss Redburn is in a very dangerous state; and I hope you will come."

"Very well. I suppose I must," said Mr. Colycynth. "Jump up—and I will drive you at once to the Manor."

It was perfectly true, as Captain Redburn

had said, that Mr. Colycinth regarded him with considerable animosity, as the author of his daughter's disgrace. Firmly convinced however was Mr. Colycinth that Kitty had only been guilty of a series of silly flirtations, and nothing more: but still it was Captain Redburn who had led her into those imprudences and indiscretions,—Captain Redburn, therefore, who was the cause of everything that had occurred. Mr. Colycinth had never liked the Redburn family: but the Baronet was too great a man, and too powerful in the district, for a humble village-surgeon to dare show his teeth. Mr. Colycinth had therefore always attended at the mansion when called in; and had always deputed himself with the utmost appearance of respect and deference towards the Baronet. He had not however the less keenly felt the haughty treatment experienced at the great man's hands, or the stately pride with which Lady Redburn was wont to acknowledge the salutations of Mrs. Colycinth and her daughters. But since the explosion of Davis's affair, both Sir Archibald and Lady Redburn had thought it necessary to cut the Colycinths altogether: they chose to feel and act as if their son was the aggrieved party and Kitty Davis the aggressor: and hence, whenever an opportunity presented itself—especially on going to church on Sundays—had they ignored the Colycinth family since the occurrence referred to.

Under all these circumstances the reader cannot be surprised that Mr. Colycinth should have hesitated to obey the footman's summons to the Manor; and if on second thoughts he had consented to proceed thither, it was through no sympathy for any member of the Redburn family—nor from any feeling of pure humanity. But the motive which did influence Mr. Colycinth in obeying that summons, was twofold. In the first place he did not deem it prudent to hurl an open defiance at Sir Archibald Redburn; and in the second place there was a certain gratification of his pride, even amounting to a sort of revenge, in being able to say to himself, "For all their fine airs they cannot do without me, when an emergency happens." Hence it may be inferred that Mr. Colycinth was not himself of the most amiable and philanthropic disposition in existence—but on the contrary, one who cherished a sense of wrong, though he was naturally too meanly selfish, too much alive to his own interests, and too worldly minded to proclaim it openly or avenge it courageously.

Such was the surgeon of the village of Oakleigh. On arriving at the Manor, he leapt out of his gig; for he was an active, bustling, slightly-made man of fifty-five years of age,—and hurrying up the entrance-steps, he was at once escorted by Paul the footman to the drawing-room. To that apartment he had never been introduced before;—his previous acquaintance with the mansion being mainly limited to the servants' hall or the chambers of the domestics.

"Walk in, Mr. Colycinth," said the Baronet, in a patronizing manner. "My sister Miss Redburn has been taken very ill. Indeed, she fell into a swoon about three quarters of an hour back; and it was with the greatest diffi-

culty, as I am given to understand, that the maids could restore her to animation—I cannot say to consciousness; for she is not conscious yet. Will you go, my dear," added Sir Archibald, turning to his wife, "and conduct Mr. Colycinth up to Aunt Jane's chamber?"

Lady Redburn looked very much as if she would rather decline the office; but doubtless reflecting that it would seem thoroughly heartless to do, she slowly raised herself up from a half-reclining position on the sofa,—saying, with an air of haughty condescension, "Yes: if Mr. Colycinth will follow me, I have no objection to show him the way."

Meanwhile, however, Mr. Arden had shaken Mr. Colycinth by the hand with a degree of cordiality that somewhat surprised the Baronet; and when Lady Redburn and the surgeon had quitted the drawing-room, Sir Archibald said, "I did not know, Arden, that you were on such good terms with Colycinth."

"Oh, good terms! I don't know about that," responded the rector. "You are aware, my dear Sir Archibald, that a clergyman is compelled to be civil to his parishioners: but I would not have you fancy that Mrs. Arden is at all intimate with Mrs. Colycinth."

"I should hope not," said the Baronet. "But, by the bye, what has become of that young woman—you know who I mean—Mrs. Davis. Is she at home with her family?"

"Yes: but she scarcely ever goes out," rejoined the clergyman; "and when she does, it is only of an evening after dusk, to take a little exercise with her mother. She never comes to church—And, now that I think of it, I shall take this opportunity of remonstrating with Colycinth upon the subject. Though perfectly willing to agree with your view of the late unfortunate case, Sir Archibald, and to believe that there was nothing criminal between her and the Captain,—still her levity, her frivolity, and her idle silly vanity, have to be atoned for; and where can they be atoned for save in the temple of worship?"

But we will leave the Baronet and Mr. Arden to pursue their conversation together in the drawing-room, while we follow in the footsteps of Lady Redburn and Mr. Colycinth, as they proceeded to Aunt Jane's chamber. This was situated on a higher floor, at the end of a long passage; and the windows looked upon the garden at the back of the house. There was in that part of the building another stair case, communicating with that passage, and leading down to a vestibule in the close vicinage of the servants' offices. This vestibule also had a door leading into a little yard walled off from the garden. The reader will have to keep these circumstances in mind.

Lady Redburn led the way, without uttering a word, to Aunt Jane's chamber,—Mr. Colycinth following at a little distance. She opened the door and looked in—first of all to see if he might enter; then turning round, she bade him walk in. He did so: but scarcely had he crossed the threshold, when he gave a kind of start—and his eyes were instantaneously swept in a singularly searching manner round that room. But that movement on his part was so



abrupt and so quickly over, that it was not noticed by Lady Redburn—nor yet by Aunt Jane's maid, who was in attendance upon her mistress. As for Aunt Jane herself, she was in precisely the condition which Sir Archibald had described: that is to say, she had been restored from her swoon, but appeared to be unconscious of all that was passing around her.

Mr. Colycinth questioned the maid as to the origin of the fit, and other details which it was necessary for him to learn: but even while listening to the responses given to his queries, he had a certain air of pre-occupation which both Lady Redburn and the maid *did* notice, and which they attributed to an affectation of grave professional solemnity. Two or three times did Mr. Colycinth glance around the room; and even while feeling the patient's pulse with one hand and holding his watch in the other, his eyes travelled away from the dial, and settled themselves first on one piece of furniture—then on another.

"There is nothing serious to apprehend," he said at length. "Miss Redburn must have experienced some shock—or her feelings by some means or other must have been greatly excited——"

"And yet I cannot understand how," observed Lady Redburn, somewhat disdainfully exhibiting her mistrust of the professional man's explanations. "My son Captain Redburn had merely been talking of a certain court-martial held on a soldier in his regiment——"

"One Frederick Lonsdale," said the maid. "Perhaps you remember the name, Mr. Colycinth? He lived in Oakleigh before he enlisted."

But the surgeon made no reply: he was now gazing intently upon the countenance of his patient—who, on her part, with her eyes wide open, was staring in glassy vacancy at the curtains at the foot of the bed.

"Well, I will go and send up some medicine at once," ejaculated Mr. Colycinth, starting up from his seat by the side of the couch in a somewhat abrupt manner: and then again were his eyes swept around the chamber. "Miss Redburn must be kept very quiet——"

"Oh, of course!" said her ladyship, with a slight toss of the head; "you need scarcely tell us that. Indeed you ought to know that Miss Redburn will receive every attention: and perhaps it would be better to send over to Middleton for the regular family physician, who is a very clever man."

This remark was superciliously insolent enough: but Mr. Colycinth did not appear to notice it;—and again for a few moments did he gaze with singular abstraction upon the wasted, ghastly, and almost fleshless countenance of the patient. Then suddenly catching up his hat, he repeated his former intimation that he would hasten home to send up some medicine; and he moved towards the door without even the ceremony of a bow to Lady Redburn, and without pausing to see whether she meant to conduct him away from the chamber, as she had brought him thither.

"Well, upon my word!" said Lady Redburn, with a more indignant toss of the head than she

had previously given: "this paltry village surgeon suddenly seems to consider himself a great man, now that he is formally called in to attend upon a Baronet's sister!"

But Mr. Colycinth heard not this haughty, insolent remark; or if he heard, he did not heed it; and, issuing from the chamber, he hurried forth from the passage. Lady Redburn followed him, for the purpose of calling him to account for daring to pass out of the room before her: and indeed she was resolved to "take him well to task," and "give him a piece of her mind!"

"Mr. Colycinth!" she exclaimed—"Mr. Colycinth, I say!—come here, sir! Stop! I wish to speak to you! What insolence!—what presumption! But what does the man mean! *That* is not the way back to the drawing-room—it leads down to the servants' offices—it is a private staircase, sir—I insist that you do not intrude there!"

But still Mr. Colycinth heeded her not; and, as the reader has most probably understood, instead of passing along the passage, he had abruptly turned off down that staircase which has previously been described.

"One—two—three—four;" and the surgeon counted the steps in an audible manner as he descended them.

"Why, the man is mad!" cried Lady Redburn; "his head is certainly turned!"

"Five—six—seven—eight;" and still did Mr. Colycinth go on counting the steps as he descended that staircase, till at length a turning concealed him from the view of Lady Redburn, who had remained standing at the top.

"He is certainly mad," she again said to herself; "and the sooner he gets out of the house, the better:"

She then continued her own way along the passage, and down the principal staircase, to the drawing-room—where she related to her husband and Mr. Arden the details of Mr. Colycinth's singular behavior. The Baronet began to fume, and speak in a high and lofty tone of what he termed "the airs of a paltry, beggarly village-surgeon:" but Mr. Arden, with a very strange expression of countenance, turned away to the window, and seemed to be looking forth upon the park—whereas in reality he was gazing on vacancy, and his entire aspect again denoted the mighty trouble that was agitating in his soul.

Meanwhile, Mr. Colycinth had descended the private staircase, counting every step, till he reached the bottom—and thus numbering altogether sixty-two. He emerged into the yard, and stood for a few moments gazing round him, to the surprise of some of the servants who beheld him through the windows of the offices, and who could not think what he was doing, or what possessed him. One of them at length came to the conclusion that he must have lost his way, and therefore accosted him with a question to that effect; but Mr. Colycinth, who appeared completely abstracted, gave no reply—and, passing out of the yard by a door the position of which he seemed to have been particularly examining, he found himself in the garden.

There he again looked about, and then struck

into a pathway leading to a gate opening through the palings into the grounds. He now seemed completely satisfied with the result of his examination of the premises; and a smile of malignant triumph appeared upon his countenance.

At this moment the sounds of footsteps reached his ears: he looked round, and beheld Captain Redburn passing along an adjacent gravel-walk, and smoking a cigar.

"Good!" was the curt observation which Mr. Colycinth muttered to himself; and he proceeded forthwith to confront Gerald, who, not having previously noticed him, was both surprised and startled at his abrupt appearance.

"Captain Redburn," said the village-surgeon, in a firm and decisive voice, as if he felt that he was endowed with an authority to intimate his will with the certainty of its being obeyed; "this meeting is most opportune. You will do me the favor, sir, to accompany me to the drawing-room, where I have something to say."

Gerald was so astounded at this peremptory mode of address, that he was for some instants at a loss what to reply: but at length recovering himself, he exclaimed, insolently, "And pray who the deuce are you, Mr. Colycinth, that you take it upon yourself to order me about just as if I was an inferior?"

"I tell you, sir," responded the surgeon, who was half-surprised at himself in being enabled to adopt such a tone towards the great man's son—"I tell you, sir, that you would do well to accompany me to the drawing-room; for I have statements to make which closely concern the honor of your family."

Captain Redburn was at once smitten with the conviction that this must be true: otherwise Mr. Colycinth, hitherto so cringingly civil and fawningly polite to all who were in a better social position than himself, could not dare to speak in so peremptory a manner. But not choosing to humble his own pride, Gerald said in his wonted self-sufficient style, "Well, come along then, since you wish it:"—and without exchanging another word, they proceeded to the drawing-room together.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### DISCLOSURES AND CONFESSIONS.

SIR ARCHIBALD and Lady Redburn were still conversing in indignant terms upon Mr. Colycinth's strange behavior; and the Rev. Mr. Arden was still gazing forth in a vacant manner, but with great inward trouble, from the window,—when Captain Redburn entered the apartment, closely followed by the village-surgeon. The Baronet and his wife at once assumed very haughty and wrathful looks on the appearance of Mr. Colycinth: but Mr. Arden, —turning suddenly round as the door opened, and at once observing that the surgeon's countenance wore a look of mingled decision and triumphant satisfaction,—sank down, in a sort of speechless dismay, upon an ottoman in that window-recess.

"Mr. Colycinth," began Sir Archibald, in a pompously inflated style, "I cannot find words to express the astonishment—I may even say the disgust—with which I learnt of your rudeness to Lady Redburn——"

"Sir Archibald," interrupted the surgeon, "I have no time to waste in a mere bandying of words. I have a certain task to perform—and I intend to accomplish it."

The Baronet and his wife were perfectly confounded at what they conceived to be the tremendous arrogance of the village apothecary; while Gerald looked on with unfeigned curiosity. But Mr. Arden, suddenly springing up from his seat, rushed towards Colycinth; and seizing him by the arm, clutched it with spasmodic violence, as he said in a low hollow voice, "For God's sake, have mercy!"

This singular appeal was not heard by the Baronet, his wife, or Gerald—though they of course saw the sudden excitement of the rector's manner: but Mr. Colycinth replied in a tone loud enough for all to hear, "Mr. Arden, I have resolved how to act—you cannot turn me from my purpose—but it will be the fault of those present if what I am about to state, transpires beyond these four walls."

The clergyman staggered back as if struck with a mortal blow: a hollow groan came slowly forth from his throat—and he looked the picture of wretchedness itself. No criminal about to be led forth to the place of execution, ever could have appeared more ghastly in aspect—more dismayed, more woe-begone, or more terror-stricken, than the Rev. Mr. Arden at that moment. But, as if all on a sudden goaded by despair to a particular course, he snatched up his hat, and was rushing precipitately towards the door,—when Mr. Colycinth caught him forcibly by the arm, crying in a voice of firmest resolve, "No—you shall remain to corroborate the tale I am about to tell, and which you will not dare deny!"

The clergyman was suddenly reduced to the passive obedience of a child in the hands of a tyrant father; and incapable of another effort to quit the room, he suffered the village surgeon to conduct him to a seat. Drawing the chair close towards the table, Mr. Arden buried his face in his hands and sobbed audibly.

These incidents struck the beholders with an astonishment almost amounting to a consternation,—confirming Gerald Redburn's previously entertained suspicion that the surgeon must indeed be conscious of some suddenly and mysteriously acquired authority,—and striking the Baronet and his wife with a similar conviction. Sir Archibald no longer attempted to overawe and intimidate Mr. Colycinth with big words and blustering manner; but seating himself at the table, he waited with anxious suspense for whatsoever was to ensue. Lady Redburn, quitting the sofa where she had been reclining, also approached the table; and Gerald did the same.

"It is not my purpose," began Mr. Colycinth, "to use any unnecessary circumlocution in what I am about to say. Mine is a plain story, though involving details which will strike you, Sir Archibald—you also, Lady Redburn—and



you likewise, sir," turning to the Captain, "with the utmost astonishment."

He paused for a few moments; while the three listeners whom he had specially addressed, were filled with the acutest suspense; but Mr. Arden still remained with his countenance buried in his hands—though his sobs had now ceased.

"The incident of which I am about to speak," resumed Mr. Colycinth, "occurred nearly thirty-one years ago. At that time I had been but a few months established at Oakleigh; and I had to contend against another medical gentleman practising there at the time and of old standing in the neighborhood. I was struggling against difficulties,—fearing that I should not be able to surmount them,—with a wife to support, and the prospect of family. The work was far more of an up-hill nature than in my sanguine hopes I had anticipated to find it; and despair was already entering my soul,—when something took place which furnished the means of maintaining my battle against hostile circumstances. One night, at about eleven o'clock—just as I was preparing to retire to bed—the surgery-bell rang. My wife, who was ill through anxiety for the future, had already retired; and the servant-girl whom we kept, had likewise sought her chamber. I hastened to answer the summons; and a gentleman whom I knew full well, at once entered the surgery. He was in considerable agitation—I may say in a state of almost frenzied excitement; and it was only in broken sentences that he could make his objects and wishes known. He informed me that a young lady, of good family, was about to become a mother without being a wife; and my professional assistance was immediately required. As a matter of course, I readily consented to accompany the gentleman, and proceed whithersoever he might direct me. But on growing more composed, he gave me to understand that there were certain conditions to be observed; and that if I assented to them, a hundred guineas should be my reward. This sum to me was an immense fortune: for my resources were at a very low ebb, and a few minutes previously my position had appeared so desperate that I had shed tears as I thought of it. I therefore clutched with avidity at whatsoever conditions might be imposed; and they were soon explained. I was to accompany the gentleman blindfolded, and to submit to any precaution which he might suggest or think fit in order to prevent me from discovering the place to which I was about to be taken. I agreed—and the gentleman at once gave me half the promised reward as an earnest of his sincerity. Having hastily run up stairs to breathe a few words of joyous hope in the ears of my wife, I returned to the surgery, and speedily put up such medicaments as might prove necessary in the case I was about to attend. I then accompanied the gentleman from the house; and he led me into the lane running by the side of the church-yard. There a gig was waiting; and the man who held the horse, immediately disappeared. It was a dark night—and the lane was involved in almost complete obscurity. The gentleman blindfolded me

with a large shawl kerchief which he had evidently brought for the purpose; and he assisted me to take a seat in the gig. Placing himself by my side, he drove rapidly away; but all the while our journey lasted he requested me to keep my hands upon my knees, and with the gloves off, so that he might see them easily and thus assure himself that I made no attempt to raise the bandage. The drive lasted about half an hour; but it occurred to me at the time, that it was unnecessarily prolonged, and that a circuitous route was taken, to mystify me all the more completely as to the direction we were pursuing. This suspicion was excited by the fact that two or three times the gentleman reined in the horse, and stopped short for a few moments, as if not quite certain which road to pursue: whereas methought that had he taken a direct one, he must have known it well, seeing that he could not be unfamiliar with the place to which he was bearing me, as he was so prominent an actor in the night's proceedings. However, the drive, as I have said, lasted half an hour; and at the expiration thereof we stopped. My companion made me alight with him, and keep close by his side with my hands down. I judged that he was tying the reins of the horse to something, and that there was no groom or other servant ready at hand to take charge of the vehicle. Then he satisfied himself that the bandage was secure; and taking my arm, he led me on. It might have been partly curiosity, which you will admit was natural enough under such circumstances,—and it might have been partly with the desire of discovering some clue to a secret for the keeping of which it was evident that gold would be lavished,—which induced me to seize upon any circumstance helping to afford such a clue. I therefore judged of the nature of the ground on which we trod: I stored in my memory the gates or doors through which we passed, as well as the turning we took after each successive one; and when we finally entered some habitation, I counted the steps of the staircase up which I was led. I was conducted by my companion into a chamber, where I was told in a hurried whisper that I should find my patient. The gentleman likewise exchanged a few whispered words with some one, who replied to him in a female voice: but the sense of their remarks I did not catch. Doubtless they were inquiries on the gentleman's part as to the state of the patient. I heard him quit the room; and then the door was locked. I did not offer to remove the bandage of my own accord; and the same female voice I had heard whispering with the gentleman, asked me if it was necessary to do so. I replied in the affirmative—that it was imperiously necessary. She remonstrated: but I positively refused to render the slightest assistance if blindfolded. She requested me to sit down, guiding me to a chair: there was a delay of a few moments, and then she bade me remove the bandage. I did so—and found myself in a handsomely furnished chamber, every feature of which at once settled itself in my memory at the first glance I threw around. But the patient whom I had come to attend had on a thick black veil: the woman

who had spoken to me had her own features concealed in a similar manner. I was not long there before a male child was born: it was a fine babe—and the mother herself had, so far as I could judge, every prospect of a speedy convalescence. I should observe that the female attendant appeared by her figure, her gait, and her speech, to be an elderly woman, if not an old one; and by her apparel she did not seem to be a regular dependant of the household—but rather a nurse hired for the occasion, or else a charwoman. When my services were over, this woman unlocked and opened the door. She then bade me resume the bandage, which she secured with her own hands, taking good care to fasten it in such a manner that I could distinguish nothing without lifting it. Then I was consigned once more to the care of the gentleman who had brought me thither; he led me out of the dwelling by the same way we had entered; and again did I count the steps of the staircase, in order to convince myself that I had accurately numbered them in the first instance. He conducted me back to the spot where the gig was waiting: we ascended the vehicle—and my companion drove away from the place. This drive also lasted half-an-hour; and we stopped in the lane by the church-yard whence we had set out. The gentleman gave me the remaining fifty guineas, and promised that thenceforth he would secretly use his influence in my favor, to recommend me professionally wheresoever he could, without appearing to have a private motive for doing so. We parted—and I returned home. You may well suppose that I was lost in conjecture as to the place to which I had been taken: for within half-an-hour's drive of Oakleigh, there were several habitations, any of which might have been the scene of that mysterious transaction. Years and years have passed since then—nearly thirty-one of those long years, as I stated at the outset: and it was reserved for this day to clear up the mystery and reveal the secret to my knowledge. Yes," added Mr. Colycinth, in a louder and more emphatic voice than that in which he had been speaking, "it was to this mansion I was brought—it was to Miss Redburn's chamber that I was conducted—and there sits the gentleman who was my companion on that memorable night!"

He pointed to Mr. Arden as he spoke; and the clergyman groaned in the bitterness of his spirit. No word escaped the lips of the Baronet, of Lady Redburn, or of Gerald: they were paralyzed with wonder and dismay—they were stricken dumb—a consternation was upon them. For even Gerald himself, though entertaining a malignant hatred towards his aunt, comprehended full well how terrible would be the dishonor redounding on the whole family, if this circumstance were made known to the world.

"Yes," continued Mr. Colycinth, "this is the mansion to which I was brought! I have counted the steps of the private staircase—I have examined the exact position of the door opening from the vestibule into the yard—of that other door opening from the boundary-wall into the garden—and of the gate leading from the garden into the grounds. I have examined

likewise the windings and turnings on those parts of the premises; and all correspond with the facts treasured up in my memory. Let Mr. Arden deny my tale if he dare! Ah, and you spoke to me just now of mercy, Mr. Arden! you would have had me keep silence in respect to the discovery I had made! And why so? For whose sake? Not for your's, Mr. Arden!—for of late years you have grown proud and haughty—your wife has looked down upon mine—you yourself have looked down upon me! Nay, more:—doubtless imagining that the secret was so well preserved, I never could penetrate it—and that if I dared to tell the tale so far as I knew it, everybody would set it down as a vile calumny in respect to yourself—you have even acted as if you chose to repudiate or lose sight of the obligation which you owed me. You have indulged in supercilious and impertinent criticisms on the conduct of my daughters.—Affecting a rigid sanctimoniousness, you have denounced them as vain and frivolous—flamboyant dressers—flirting, giddy young women.—And you, Sir Archibald Redburn—and you, Lady Redburn—have treated me and mine with all the haughty airs of great people looking down upon their inferiors. But *you*, Captain Redburn, have been the means of ruining the reputation of a child whom I love—aye, love as much as the rich man can possibly love *his* children. But this day the pride and arrogance of all of you have been doomed to experience a bitter humiliation. One word more.—I know it not for a certainty—but every circumstance now tends to justify the suspicion and corroborate the belief—that the unfortunate offspring of Miss Redburn—*your* offspring too, Mr. Arden—is none other than that same Frederick Lonsdale who lies under sentence of death at Middleton!"

"He is, he is!" groaned Mr. Arden: and now lifting up his head, he revealed a countenance so convulsed with the ineffable agonies which were rending his soul, that his entire physical aspect seemed to be altered. "Yes, Mr. Colycinth has spoken naught but the truth; and in me, Sir Archibald Redburn, you behold the most miserable of men!"

The Baronet rose from his seat, and walked three or four times to and fro in the apartment in a state of considerable agitation. Lady Redburn was immensely shocked: Gerald was full of apprehension lest a terrific exposure should take place; and he thought to himself that if this were so, he should never dare go back to his regiment or look the world again in the face, after all his conduct to Frederick Lonsdale.

"Mr. Arden," at length said the Baronet, walking straight up to the miserable man, whose appearance was indeed pitiable in the extreme, "let everything be confessed—let everything be made known! Tell me the entire history of the past—fill up whatsoever details are wanting in the narrative we have heard."

"I will," said the Rector. "Good God! whatsoever atonement I can offer, shall be cheerfully made—even though at the sacrifice of my own reputation in the world."

Then followed the explanations which the Baronet sought,—but given in such broken and



lences—interrupted by so many sobs and moans, as well as floods of tears—and intermingled too with so many entreaties for pardon and mercy, that it would be impossible to record the narrative precisely as it was delivered by the wretched Arden. We will therefore convey it in our own language, and in as condensed a shape as possible.

We must however commence by observing that about thirty-two years previous to the date of which we are writing, Jane Redburn, Sir Archibald's sister, was a beautiful girl of sixteen. A gay, laughing, and joyous creature was she,—perfectly inexperienced in the world,—but with a very susceptible heart, and passions which, though slumbering then, only needed to be awakened to become full of ardor. The parents of Archibald and Jane Redburn had died early. Jane was educated by a governess,—at first under the supervision of an old aunt, who at that time resided at the Manor. But the aunt died when Jane was fifteen: the governess remained another year,—at the expiration of which it was considered that the young lady's education was finished; and the tutoress was accordingly dismissed. Archibald and Jane now resided alone together at the Manor House—without relatives to be the guides or companions of the young lady. At that time, Sir Archibald, being only twenty-six, and as yet unmarried, was a gay dashing man,—fond of field sports when in the country, and fond of dissipation when in London. He was much attached to his sister: but he neglected her, without however wilfully intending to do so. Indeed, this neglect consisted in leaving her too much alone—throwing her too much upon her own resources—and taking no measures to provide her with the permanent companionship of any eligible females. The consequence was that Jane was treated as a woman when she was still only a girl; she was the mistress of the Manor: she presided over the household—she did as she chose. The Rev. Mr. Arden had lately been inducted into the Rectory of Oakleigh. At the time we are speaking of, he was about two-and-thirty—of an exceedingly handsome person, fascinating manners, winning address, and brilliant powers of conversation. He was married, and had already two children. His career at the University had been dissipated and profligate: and his habits continued irregular even for some years after he had left College: indeed, he had lost two or three curacies through his bad conduct; and it was owing to a fortunate friendship with Sir Archibald that he settled down at length in the living of Oakleigh.—Mr. Arden was a thoroughly unprincipled man: and when in the course of time he perceived that the beautiful, artless, and inexperienced Jane Redburn had conceived a growing attachment for him, he was base and wicked enough to encourage the sentiment. She at first did not comprehend it—she did not know what it was—she mistook it for friendship; and giving way to its influence, only had her eyes opened to the real state of her heart, when that heart's affections were inextricably entangled. Mr. Arden fanned the flame till it well nigh devour-

ed her: he used the most detestable sophistry to stifle her scruples and overcome her virtue—and he succeeded but too well.

Sir Archibald's frequent absences from home, afforded ample opportunities for his sister and Mr. Arden to pursue their illicit amour—which, we should add, was so carefully veiled, that it remained utterly unsuspected by every one. In due time, Jane Redburn found herself in a way to become a mother; and then both she and Mr. Arden grew seriously alarmed. The circumstance was, however, concealed until the very last: Miss Redburn managed to hide her position from even the prying eyes of the female servants of the household. Fortunately for this purpose of concealment, Sir Archibald Redburn took it into his head to pay a three months' visit to London at the time when the crisis was approaching. He expected his sister to go with him—and was somewhat surprised when she begged to be allowed to remain at the Manor. He had, however, become so much accustomed to let her have her own way, and to treat her as a grown-up woman who could be properly left to her own guidance, that he did not insist; and so she remained. This was a great point won in the estimation of Mr. Arden; and he now began to breathe more freely. In a variety of ways did he counsel her how to act, in order to prepare for the coming event. Following all his suggestions, she gradually dispensed with the services of her lady's-maid in respect to the toilet; and, with a great pretence of strictness, she compelled all the servants to retire to their chambers at a particular hour, and to bring her, every evening, the keys of the premises. As the time approached, Mr. Arden made a confidante of a poor woman of the name of Grant, who resided in the village, and whom he knew to be the very person suited for the purpose. Miss Redburn engaged her, on his recommendation, as an occasional charwoman to assist at the Manor House; and thus was she afforded a footing beneath that roof without exciting any suspicion as to the ulterior object. It was moreover privately arranged, that if the expected infant should live, Mrs. Grant was to have the care of it. We must add, that it was all along the Rector's purpose to employ the professional services of Mr. Colycinth, when the time should come—but not to entrust him with the secret beforehand. He saw that Colycinth was struggling and needy, and that difficulties were growing fast around him; and it was therefore natural to suppose that he would jump at the proposal when made, and willingly accede to the conditions accompanying it. Nevertheless, when the crisis did arrive, Mr. Arden was naturally filled with apprehensions of discovery and exposure; and hence the excitement he had displayed when calling upon Colycinth on the memorable night the incidents of which have already been described. All, however, passed off with the strictest secrecy, and without the slightest misadventure. Mrs. Grant was there, ready at hand—the domestics had retired at the usual hour—Miss Redburn had the keys of the doors and gates, which afforded Mr. Arden and the surgeon the means of ingress and egress, and when the servants arose in the morning

they entertained not the remotest suspicion of what had occurred during the night.

But we must observe that after the departure of Mr. Arden and Colycinth on that same memorable night,—and so soon as Miss Redburn could be safely left alone,—Mrs. Grant repaired with the babe to her own cottage; and for several weeks she managed to prevent her neighbors from knowing that there was any such little stranger beneath her roof—so that the date of its arrival could not, by any possible suspicion, nor by any whispering of scandal, be regarded as identical with a three or four days' indisposition which it was alleged Miss Redburn had experienced. Indeed, nearly two whole months elapsed before Mrs. Grant's neighbors knew that there was a child in her care; and when at last she chose to suffer the circumstance to become known, she pretended that she had only received the infant on that same day. Mr. Colycinth had his suspicions that she was the woman whom he had seen at the place to which he was taken, and that this was the child whom he had helped to bring into the world. He therefore—dexterously and cunningly, as he thought—threw out a few hints in private to Mrs. Grant, with the hope of leading her into revelations: but she played her part so well in affecting not to understand him, that he imagined he must be mistaken—or if not, it was plain enough that the woman intended to keep the secret. Indeed Mrs. Grant was thoroughly trustworthy; and moreover, as she was promised a certain weekly stipend for the maintenance of the child, with the understanding that it would be taken from her should the secret become known, she found it to her interest to put a seal upon her lips. Having previously been merely a charwoman, she now opened a little shop, to serve as an ostensible source of her livelihood; but as it was well known in the village that it could not possibly support her, thence arose the rumor that she received some assistance from another quarter. But what this source was, no one ever knew—no one indeed ever surmised. It was perfectly natural that the clergyman of the parish should drop in to pay her a visit from time to time, as he did to his other parishioners; and he took good care, when putting the stipend into her hand, that no witness was ever present.

The name of Frederick Lonsdale was bestowed upon the child. This nomenclature sprang not from any suggestion on the part of either the father or the mother: it was entirely the result of the good woman's own choice, and might be explained by the fact that she loved the Christian name of *Frederick*, and that when thinking of a surname for the boy, she had lighted upon that of *Lonsdale* in an old newspaper. So he was called Frederick Lonsdale; and he grew up with the mystery hanging about his birth—Jane Redburn's secret remaining not merely unknown, but utterly unsuspected. As for any attachment ever having subsisted between herself and Mr. Arden, such an idea never entered the head of a soul. But though the world knew not her frailty, and indeed her guilt,—guilt in thus abdicating to a

stranger the child who had asked not to be born,—there was a secret monitor within her bosom that constantly reminded her of the past. Her disposition changed: her mind became jaundiced; and she learnt to look with an evil eye upon the world. She saw in Mr. Arden the veriest hypocrite and most consummate impostor that ever dared desecrate the pulpit; and this alone was sufficient to make her mistrust every human being. To mistrust in such a sense, was almost to hate; and as she was thus led to regard her fellow-creatures with a feeling so closely bordering upon aversion, it could not be wondered if her accents and the manner of her speech gradually became infused with that bitterness and acrimony which in course of time became habitual. The physical aspect of the woman changed concurrently with her mental condition, and the care which corroded in her soul, preyed also upon the heart's vitals. But did she continue to love Mr. Arden? No—impossible! As her experience of the world became enlarged,—and it did so speedily, as the necessary result of her own fall and acquaintance with sin—she was led to regard him as the black-hearted author of her shame, her guilt, and all her sufferings. From prudential motives—which are obvious enough—she did not choose to come to an open rupture with him: they therefore continued to meet throughout the lapse of long, long years, in the light of acquaintances: but never from the birth of their child was the word “love” mentioned; and with that event Miss Redburn's frailty terminated. She subsequently sinned no more.

And now, the next question which doubtless occurs to the reader is, whether they loved their son—the offspring of their illicit amour! Mr. Arden did not. A man seldom or never cares for his illegitimate child; and the rector of Oakleigh was by no means an individual likely to prove an exception to that rule. So far from entertaining the slightest feeling of kindness towards Frederick Lonsdale, Mr. Arden regarded him with a hatred that increased as the boy grew up; though during Widow Grant's lifetime, he never in any way manifested an aversion which would have shocked and pained the woman, who possessed a good heart and had learnt to love her charge as dearly as if he were her own son. But what of Aunt Jane? It is generally very different with a woman than with a man in respect to an illegitimate child: the mother usually loves the being that was born in shame, and through whom her honor is either risked or ruined. But from this rule Miss Redburn was an exception. The offspring of her illicit love was included to a certain degree in the aversion which she entertained for all mankind: and thus she never experienced a yearning to speed to the village—to clasp him to her bosom—and acknowledge him as her own. Yet Miss Redburn had become religious; in proportion as her hatred of the world had increased, so had her piety—or rather that sort of piety which such persons devise and fashion for themselves. Moreover, though regarding the rector of Oakleigh as a consummate hypocrite, she nevertheless at



tended his church twice every Sunday: but then, it was not to listen to *his* discourse—it was only because she felt the necessity of visiting a temple of worship, and she could not possibly choose another than that which belonged to the parish where she dwelt. It would however occupy too much space to enter upon minute explanations respecting the peculiarities into which this unhappy woman's mind settled itself: suffice it to say that though her entire nature was embittered by the guilt of her earlier years, she sought not to make an atonement by acknowledging her son and doing her duty towards him—but she took refuge in a church-going regularity and a habit of prayer-reading in private, which she persuaded herself to believe were the sole elements of a true religious piety.

The reader is aware that shortly after Frederick Lonsdale attained the age of eighteen, a fire consumed Mrs. Grant's cottage; and the poor old woman herself, being bed-ridden, perished in the conflagration. Mr. Arden experienced no sorrow at this catastrophe; on the contrary, he was well pleased at the occurrence;—and though Miss Redburn herself scarcely regretted it, yet to do her justice, she experienced a much less heartless feeling on the subject than the rector. Their secret now appeared to be safe beyond the possibility of discovery; but there was a moment when Aunt Jane, on hearing that Frederick Lonsdale was left penniless by the calamity, felt her soul moved towards him;—and she proposed to Mr. Arden that something should be done for his benefit. She represented that whatever should be thus done, might be made to appear the spontaneous bounty of himself as the village-clergyman, though her purse should furnish the means. But he would not for a single instant consent to the proposition. He had acquired the reputation of a steady, religious, and holy man; and he would do nothing that should excite the faintest suspicion, or lead the villagers to form conjectures as to the motive of any special kindness shown towards Frederick Lonsdale. No: he would rather that his ignored and unacknowledged son should starve, than that by doing ought for him he might incur the slightest chance of having the past suspected and his reputation ruined. For Mr. Colycynth continued to dwell in the village; and if he saw that Frederick Lonsdale received any special favors from Mr. Arden, he might be led to form a conclusion by no means agreeable to the reverend gentleman. Therefore Lonsdale was left to shift for himself; and he became a laborer on the estate of his own mother's brother.

From the fact that Miss Redburn did on that particular occasion make such a proposal to Mr. Arden, the reader may infer that there were moments when her heart was smitten with remorse on account of her ignored and neglected offspring. It was so: but these moments were rare indeed, and occurred only at long intervals. It was such a mood was it, for instance, that on the day when Frederick Lonsdale was finally sworn as a recruit in presence of Sir Archibald Redburn, Aunt Jane fixed upon him so peculiar a look as he was traversing the hall,—that look

which frequently haunted him afterwards, and which he never could understand. For, as he thought at the time, it certainly was not spite, nor gloating triumph: but how could he fancy it was a commiseration? Oh, much less could he fancy that it was the look of a mother's remorse which at that moment was flung upon him! Yet it was so: and the next time Miss Redburn had an opportunity of speaking in private to Mr. Arden, she told him of the sudden paroxysm of bitter, bitter anguish she had experienced when beholding her own offspring going away as a recruit in the power of Sergeant Langley. Yet it was not with the idea of receiving any sympathy from Mr. Arden that she thus communicated the state of her feelings; it was more as a reproach which she levelled at him! For the clergyman had not hesitated, on more occasions than one, and even in *her* presence, to join in with the Baronet and Gerald in depreciatory language of Frederick Lonsdale—his own son!

But little more in the shape of explanation remains to be given. The reader has seen how, during the last few years which this narrative has embraced, Aunt Jane's spite had become more bitter and more rancorous towards her nephew Gerald. This was natural. She regarded him as the author of her own son's dismissal from Sir Archibald's employment, and of the necessity which had driven him to enlist; and though she loved not that son—though she cared not for him—though it was only at distant and fitful moments of compunction she thought of him without aversion,—yet it was entirely consistent with the morbid state of her mind, that she should look upon his bitterest persecutor with hatred. Moreover, inasmuch as every time Gerald mentioned the name of Lonsdale, on the occasion of his visits to the Manor House, during the lapse of the last few years, it was in the most rancorous spirit,—Miss Redburn's malignity was proportionately increased towards her nephew for those very causes. But now at last things had come to a crisis. Frederick Lonsdale was condemned to die—and for an offence to which Aunt Jane had no doubt that Gerald had provoked him. It was natural that her remorse on account of her unacknowledged son should become embittered almost to madness; it was natural, too, that with her acrimonious disposition, she should vent her spite against Gerald with all the virulence which the reader has seen her display when he rode across to the Manor, and announced the issue of the court-martial. Mr. Arden had also heard the intelligence that self-same morning: and hence his somewhat early visit to the Manor—for he was devoured with execrating terrors as to the way in which Miss Redburn might receive it, and the course she might at the last hour think fit to adopt towards her offspring. No wonder, therefore, that when first entering the room, and catching a glimpse of her ghastly countenance—whereon was written a tablet of thoughts inexplicable at the time to the others present, but which *he* could too well read,—no wonder, we say, that Mr. Arden was seized with so mortal a terror, and that he should have felt and looked like one annihilated, when Miss

Redburn, maddened to desperation, suddenly gave vent to that terrific cry, and fell down in a swoon. Nor will the reader marvel that the rector of Oakleigh should have been again stricken with dismay, when Colycinth followed Gerald Redburn into the drawing-room, with an expression upon his countenance which at once convinced the miserable man that his worst fears were confirmed—that the secret was discovered—and that the surgeon intended to proclaim it.

Yes: and all was indeed now known. Colycinth's tale, followed up by Arden's confessions, revealed the whole astounding circumstances to Sir Archibald and Lady Redburn, and to Gerald. Thus did they now learn that Frederick Lonsdale—the man whose name had for years been made the object of hatred and aversion, scorn and contempt, at the Manor House—who had been driven by the Baronet and his son to enlistment—whom that same son had persecuted so remorselessly and so pitilessly, and in a certain sense had even hunted to the very death,—thus did they learn that this self-same Frederick Lonsdale was the offspring of a scion of their own family, and that the blood of the Redburns might be said to circulate in his veins!

But what was to be done? The Baronet knew not—Lady Redburn knew not—Gerald knew not. Mr. Arden, convulsed with grief, rather through dread of exposure, than through remorse for the past, could suggest nothing. And even if he were able to command his ideas and collect his thoughts, to reason deliberately, what was there that he *could* possibly suggest, he who was overwhelmed with shame and confusion, in the presence of those whose relative he had dishonored, and had entailed upon her such long years of misery! The Baronet would have spurned and driven the vile man ignominiously forth from the house, only that he also trembled at exposure, and was thinking how he could best hush up all that had been made known in that drawing-room within the past hour. He knew full well that after the painful excitement she had shown, and the sudden ebullition of agitated feeling to which she had given vent,—Aunt Jane, when fully restored to consciousness, would insist that no effort should be spared to save Lonsdale's life. In this respect, therefore, Sir Archibald Redburn's resolve was promptly taken.

Suddenly accosting his wife, he bent down to her, and said in a quick excited whisper, "Go you up to your sister-in-law's room—remain with her—endeavor as much as possible to dispense with the presence of the maid, so that when she comes completely to herself, you may be at hand to give her the immediate assurance that all my influence shall be exerted to procure Lonsdale's pardon. But tell her likewise—impress it upon her mind—make her thoroughly understand, that the secret must still be kept—that he must never know to whom he owes his being—that the mystery of his parentage must continue. Tell her also, that his future welfare shall be my care—In short, do all you can to tranquilize her mind, so that she shall not betray herself."

Lady Redburn,—who trembled as much as her husband at the idea of an exposure in respect to a member of the family into which she had married,—displayed unusual alacrity in hastening to fulfil his instructions; and when she had left the drawing-room, Sir Archibald beckoned Mr. Colycinth to step aside with him to the farther extremity of that spacious apartment. The surgeon,—who had remained seated near the table with the air of a man possessed of a tremendous secret giving him the power to dictate his own terms,—followed the Baronet into a window-recess; and the latter, feeling that he had no time to lose and that all his proceedings must now be expeditiously taken, at once said to the village-surgeon, "Mr. Colycinth, what do you require of me? Name the conditions upon which you will keep this secret."

"Five thousand pounds," was the surgeon's immediate response: and the look which he fixed upon the Baronet, showed that the terms had been already settled in his own mind, and that he was resolved to extort the full amount of his demand without the abatement of a single farthing.

"You shall have that sum," responded Sir Archibald Redburn. "I am about to proceed to London—the money shall be placed in your name in the Bank of England. Now hasten home, and send up such medicines as my sister may require."

Mr. Colycinth could not repress a smile of triumphant satisfaction at the readiness with which his terms were accepted; and with a slight bow he quitted the apartment.

"Mr. Arden," said the Baronet, now approaching the clergyman, who trembled like an aspen leaf when thus accosted by the brother of her whom he had so basely wronged and beguiled in her inexperienced girlhood,—“Mr. Arden and the Baronet spoke coldly and sternly,—‘I need not tell you that our friendship is at an end—our acquaintance also. Nevermore may you set foot within these walls; and when we meet henceforth, it will be as strangers. Devise what tale you will to account amongst your parishioners for this breach, which they will not fail full soon to notice: but doubtless for your own sake you will keep inviolable the secret of your own base perfidy and of my sister's shame. Be gone, sir!’”

The wretched man was for a moment inclined to fling himself at the feet of Sir Archibald Redburn and implore his pardon: but he dared not; he felt that for such guilt as his, no pardon could be accorded. In the most abject state of humiliation he slunk out of the room; and it was not till he began descending the staircase that he could so far master his feelings as to congratulate himself on having escaped the fullest exposure of his conduct to the whole world, or that he recollected the necessity of assuming a tranquil demeanor in order to avoid attracting the notice of the domestics whom he might encounter while passing forth from the mansion.

"Gerald," said the Baronet, turning quickly to his son, the moment Mr. Arden had issued from the drawing-room, "what is the interval



that in the ordinary course would be allowed to elapse ere the execution of the sentence?"

"The proceedings of the court-martial," responded Captain Redburn, "have to be sent up to the Horse Guards for approval. They were no doubt despatched by yesterday's post: they will probably be returned by Friday morning—in which case the execution would take place on Saturday."

"And to-day is Tuesday," said the Baronet. "There is no time to lose. I shall take my departure for London within an hour. Hasten you back to Middleton, and see Colonel Wyndham at once. If I remember right, he is under obligations to you—you have lent him money—he is still needy and necessitous—Well then, offer to lend or give him a thousand—two thousand—three thousand pounds—any sum, so that he will do what you demand."

"And what am I to ask of him?" inquired Gerald.

"Can you not understand?" exclaimed the Baronet, stamping his foot impatiently. "Procure from him a recommendation to mercy—and lose no time in despatching it by a mounted messenger to London. It will materially assist the endeavors which I also shall make. But beware, Gerald, how you trifle or hesitate in this matter: for I fear me, that we have already too much to answer for in respect to the treatment which, from first to last, Frederick Lonsdale has experienced at our hands. And one word more, Gerald," added the Baronet. "Be you here—at the Manor—on Friday, to await my return—so that if I am fortunate enough to bring with me the pardon or reprieve whichever it may be, you can at once set off with it to Middleton, and give it with your own hands to Colonel Wyndham. It will be a matter of life or death—and no ordinary messenger must be trusted in such a case. You understand me, Gerald? Away with you—away with you to Middleton at once!"

Captain Redburn lost no time in mounting his horse to ride back to Middleton; and the traveling-carriage being speedily got in readiness, Sir Archibald set off on his journey to London.

## CHAPTER XL.

### THE CONDEMNED SOLDIER.

In a cell, at the extremity of a passage communicating from the guard-house of the barracks at Middleton, Frederick Lonsdale was seated. The window—narrow and high up—was defended by massive iron bars: the door was of huge proportions: the walls were thick, and of the most solid masonry. In that passage a sentinel walked to and fro; and the measured tread of his footsteps beat monotonously upon the ear of the condemned. There was not the slightest possibility of escape,—even if such a hope had been otherwise than an occasional wild and transient thought which flitted through his brain—a thought to be rejected as soon as it sprang up, and to leave the darkness of despair behind!

It was Wednesday afternoon—the day after that on which the preceding scenes had taken place at the Manor House. Frederick Lonsdale, now unable to procure any artificial stimulant, was a prey to the deepest despondency. Remorse was devouring his heart, as he thought of his conduct towards the most amiable of wives and the most affectionate of children. It would have been some little consolation were he able to reflect that his conduct had been otherwise, and that he had continued a good husband and a kind father even until the last. But the solace of such a reflection was denied him: and with the bitterest regret did he look back on all the sufferings he had made his Lucy and his little Frederick endure.

He was plunged into a mood of such sad and awful meditation, that in itself it was almost a sufficient punishment for whatsoever he might have done—when he heard the key turn in the lock—the huge bolts were drawn back—Lucy and the boy entered the cell. The door was closed behind them again: the key turned and the bolts were drawn once more. Then ensued a scene which defies all the power of language to depict—a scene in which a conscience-stricken husband, an anguished wife, and a wildly sobbing child were the three actors. For the poor boy knew that something terrible was to happen to his father, although he had not been suffered to learn the whole tremendous truth. Lonsdale strained his poor wife to his breast—then he embraced his son—all amidst convulsions of grief: and then he turned aside to pour forth the agony of his heart in floods of tears and piteous lamentations. Lucy fell upon her knees—took his hand—pressed it to her lips,—sobbing and weeping convulsively, and feeling as if her heart would break.

After a while there was some little degree of composure on the part of those three unhappy beings; and Lonsdale asked, in a low whispering voice, whether his wife would forgive him for all the sorrows he had caused her? Forgive him—Oh, yes! had his cruelty been ten thousand times greater than it was, she would have forgiven him! Indeed, there was no forgiveness to award: for she had never been angered against him. She had felt and she had suffered: but not the slightest sentiment of rancor had ever penetrated into the noble heart of that generous woman. Forgive him?—Oh, if there were indeed any forgiveness to be bestowed, most cordially did she bestow it! But again and again did she beseech him not to address her in that strain—not to sue for pardon, for she had made every allowance on his behalf at the time—she had pitied and she had loved him: her anger had never been excited!

Then Lonsdale, in the most earnest manner, assured her how bitterly, bitterly he repented of the past—and how fully he appreciated the treasure he had possessed in the wife to whom these words were addressed. Oh! if he could but live the last two years of his existence over again—how different would his conduct be! Lucy conjured him to fix his thoughts upon the future: for she saw that it was agony for him to revert them upon the past. In a low whispering voice—so that the child might not catch

the fearful import of his words—Lonsdale assured her that, when left to the solitude of that dungeon-cell, he modelled his thoughts as much as he was enabled towards making his peace with heaven; and that when the awful moment came, he should meet his doom with the firmness of a man, and the resignation of a Christian. Poor Lucy laid her head upon his shoulder, and vainly endeavored to stifle the sobs that were convulsing her heart. Then, as Lonsdale held her clasped in one arm and his boy in the other, he was smitten with an appalling despair as he asked himself what was to become of them—Oh! what was to become of them? He feared that his poor wife would not long survive his death; and then, who would take charge of the boy? who would rear him? who would be kind to him? who would even give him a home and food? As he asked himself these questions, despair seemed to be turning into madness—affliction rising into frenzy.

"Oh, my God!" he exclaimed wildly; "what will become of you both? what will become of you?"

"Hush, dearest Frederick!" said the poor wife, straining him still closer to her harrowed and tortured bosom: "give not way to these dreadful thoughts. Oh, what can I do to impart consolation to your soul? Tell me, dear Frederick, what can I do? what can I say?"

But the unhappy Lonsdale was now unable to give any response: he was once more convulsed with anguish—he was a prey to the wildest despair. Disengaging himself from the arms of his wife and son, he began pacing to and fro in the cell; and poor Lucy was afraid to accost him with fresh entreaties that he would gather his fortitude to his aid—for she had no hope to give; and where is the consolation which is not based upon hope? Suddenly he stopped short—and for a few instants contemplated his wife and his son with a look so sad—Oh! so sad—it was the dimest and dreariest that ever appeared upon the human countenance. For during those few moments myriads of agonizing thoughts swept through the brain of the unhappy man. He beheld the care-worn, haggard countenance and wasted form of that wife, who was once so beautiful in the vigor of health and in the cheerfulness of her disposition: he beheld, too, the pale face and emaciated figure of the once blooming boy; and although at the instant no tears were trickling down the cheeks of the miserable man, yet inwardly his heart was weeping tears of blood. Never had the death-bed known such anguish—never had the churchyard seen such utter woe on the brink of the hollowed grave—as the affliction and despair which were experienced then in that dungeon-cell. And, oh! when memory winged its rapid flight beyond those iron bars and those massive walls, and flew to the fair scenes in the neighborhood of Oakleigh, amidst which he had first known his Lucy—where he had first learnt to love her—where they had been wont to meet by the stream in the grove—and where they had whispered the words of love,—Oh! what memory thus revisited those scenes, and when retrospection traveled rapidly over the incidents of those hap-

pier times, it was enough to drive him to madness—to goad him into frenzy—as his mind, returning abruptly from the past, settled itself again upon the horrible present! During those few moments that he thus stood gazing upon his wife and child—and as these memories surged up into his reeling, throbbing, bursting brain—the unhappy man endured entire worlds of torture—passed through the concentrated excruciations of whole centuries. Again did the tears gush forth from his eyes: again did the convulsing sobs escape from his half-suffocating throat;—and snatching his wife and child to his arms, he covered them with passionate kisses—he bedewed them with his tears—he moaned and lamented over them as never man before or since moaned over the wife who was soon to become a widow, or over the child who was soon to be left an orphan!

The scene, as we said at the outset, transcended all power of description. There is no language competent to convey an idea of the anguish and the mental agony endured within those four walls. Oh! for whatsoever offence Lonsdale might have committed, society and the world were already fearfully avenged!

An hour passed; and at the expiration of that interval the door was opened again—and the soldier who appeared upon the threshold, was himself well nigh overcome with grief on beholding the piteous leave-taking that now ensued. Yes—piteous indeed was it: and yet these were not the last farewells that were spoken. It was believed that the execution would take place on the Saturday: this was only the Wednesday—there were two more clear days to intervene—two more visits for the wife and child to pay to a condemned husband and father. If therefore this leave-taking was so fraught with crucifying anguish—if it were so profoundly characterized by feelings of despair—how would those poor creatures pass through the ordeal of the last farewell, when the Friday evening should come? Such was the thought which traversed the mind of the compassionate soldier, as he stood upon the threshold of the cell—and the tears trickled down his countenance; he too sobbed aloud. At length the almost heartbroken Lucy and the weeping boy issued forth from the dungeon: and Lonsdale flung himself in despair upon his pallet.

On the following day—the Thursday—there was a repetition of the distressing scene which we have endeavored to describe; and when the moment approached for another separation, Frederick summoned all his fortitude to his aid to whisper something in his wife's ear.

"To-morrow, my own dear Lucy," he said, in a voice which despite all his efforts, was broken and tremulous with the emotions that were rending his heart, "to-morrow will be the last time for us to meet in this world."

Lonsdale stopped short: for he felt his poor wife's arms tightening convulsively round his neck—and he felt too that a strong spasmodic shuddering passed through her entire frame. Oh, how ineffable was her anguish, as her husband's words!



"For heaven's sake command yourself, my own dear wife," murmured the miserable man: "for we must exert all our fortitude. To-morrow, then, will be our last interview, and you and I must be alone together. To-day I shall bid farewell—an eternal farewell to—to—"

But he could not finish the broken, murmured, whispered sentence as he glanced towards the pale though beautiful countenance of little Frederick, who with the tears bedewing his cheeks, was gazing up at him in so sad a manner, that the father's heart was riven with anguish. But when the moment came for this day's meeting to end, and when that father, on straining the boy to his breast, felt that it was for the last time,—Oh, it was crucifixion! it was impalement! it was the agony of agonies that he endured! It seemed as if life itself were being torn away from him, amidst excruciating tortures: it was as if parting from the very chords that held his soul as yet bound to existence. And the child, instinctively comprehending what it meant, asked in so piteous a tone "if he should never see his dear papa again?" that both Lonsdale and Lucy felt as if they were on the verge of shrieking forth as maniacs, or of dashing their heads against the wall in despair. Indeed, for a short space did frenzy so seize upon the brain of the condemned soldier, that he held both his wife and child to his breast, declaring that he would not part from them; and they also clung with an equal tenacity to him. But at length Lucy staggered forth from the cell, with the weeping boy: the door closed, and Lonsdale, seized with the sudden numbness of a stupor, fell heavily upon the stone-floor. When he came back to consciousness, it all appeared to him a hideous dream: but the conviction of its reality soon fastened upon him again,—and then what anguish did he endure! what bitter lamentations came forth from his lips!

On the ensuing day—the Friday—Frederick Lonsdale was informed at about noon that the proceedings of the court-martial had been approved of at the Horse Guards, and that the sentence would be carried into effect on the following morning. We must however observe that Colonel Wyndham had complied with Captain Redburn's solicitation for a recommendation to mercy; and that this recommendation had been duly despatched to the Horse Guards in London. It had reached the commander-in-chief *after* he had sent off his first decision: indeed the approval of the sentence and the recommendation to mercy crossed each other on the way—so that the receipt of the former at Middleton was no proof that the latter would not be attended to. But it was not usual to suffer a condemned soldier to learn that any interest was being used on his behalf, or that there was any hope of a reprieve; and Lonsdale was consequently left in perfect ignorance of what was going on. He therefore received that announcement in respect to the approval of the sentence by the Horse Guards, as the final warning to prepare for a doom that was inevitable. Not for an instant had he entertained the slightest hope, even from the very first: for he knew how rancorous were his enemies, and he

little thought of the interest that had so suddenly been awakened on his behalf at the dwelling of Sir Archibald Redburn.

Now came the last interview between himself and Lucy. His farewells had been said to little Frederick on the previous day: he had felt that it would be better that he and his wife should on this final occasion be alone together. It was at five o'clock in the evening that she was introduced to the cell. The poor creature had, on her own part, nerved herself with all the energy of her soul for this last meeting: Lonsdale had done the same on his side. He wished to converse with her in a mood of sacred serene composure: he wished once more to receive from her lips the assurance that his past misconduct was forgiven; and he was desirous that this assurance should be conveyed, not in impassioned and vehement accents, but with as much awe-felt solemnity as if the speaker were, by the side of a death-bed. And then, too, he wished to talk to Lucy seriously of the future: to implore that she would endeavor to live for their child's sake—and to take counsel with her in respect to the means of obtaining her subsistence. With these several objects in view, Frederick Lonsdale had put forth all the natural powers of his mind, and had gathered all his energies, so that there might be no undue weakness nor failing at the last.

Lucy entered the cell—the door closed behind her—the next instant they were clasped in each other's arms. Then for several minutes all their fortitude appeared to be melting away; all their strength of mind was yielding to the influence of ineffable emotions. But each at length remembered the predetermined attempt to appear as calm as possible; and sitting down together, with each other's hands retained in a firm clasp, they struggled against the gush of feelings that were swelling and surging up into their very throats. They gazed upon each other long, and tenderly, and mournfully.—Heavens! how poor Lucy was altered. For many months past her personal appearance had been changing: for many weeks past it had been changing more and more: within the last few days it had been changing more rapidly still: but within the last twenty-four hours that change had been terrific. It had done the work of years. She looked as if the anguish of the entire earth had been concentrated in her bosom—as if the woes of all the world had accumulated themselves upon her head. And yet, even with that profoundly mournful expression upon her countenance—with despair in her eyes—with woe printed and stamped on every feature—there was still an interesting beauty left, which filled her husband's heart with an ineffable pathos. O God! that he had ever been cruel to such a wife as this! and worse still, that he had ever raised his hand against her! All the immensity of the love she had borne him—that love which had survived all cruelty, all ill-treatment, all blows—that love which had known no diminution even when she herself was dragged through the mire of poverty and amidst the keenly piercing thorns of the world's highway—the whole extent of this sublime and immortal affection was now more than

ever understood, more than ever appreciated by Frederick Lonsdale!

He sank upon his knees before his wife—he pressed her hand to his lips—he gazed up into her countenance—and he said to her in a deep touching voice, “Dearest Lucy, do not interrupt me for a few minutes while I address you. I will not again ask you to forgive me for the past, because I do indeed comprehend that your anger was never excited against me. It was my intention ere you came just now, to entreat that solemn assurance of pardon from your lips; but I feel that it would be almost an insult to your generous heart to do so. Yet let me assure you, my own beloved wife, that the greatest pang which now tortures my heart is caused by the reflection of how cruelly I have used you. No, dearest—do not interrupt me! Permit me to say all that I wish: it is a relief thus to assure you of my contrition. For now that we are about to part—for ever, beloved Lucy—I feel how dear you are to me—I comprehend all your virtues—all your excellencies—My God! my God! that I should ever have lost sight of them!”—and the unfortunate man’s fortitude breaking down in an instant, he was convulsed with anguish.

Lucy threw herself upon his neck, and sobbed and wept with the bitterest affliction. Her courage had vanished likewise,—vanished as a dream; and she experienced all the excruciating poignancy of the heart’s acutest woe. It was a long time ere they could so far compose themselves as to enter upon deliberate discourse again; and then, once more seated side by side, they gazed on each other for several minutes ere the silence was broken. But Lonsdale with a superhuman effort gathered together the wrecks of his fortitude, and began to speak upon those other topics which he had been solicitous to touch upon. Lucy saw that it would be a solace to his mind if she reassured him with regard to herself; and therefore she yielded to the turn which he sought to give to their discourse. She said that for the sake of their child she would cling to existence—that they were not altogether without friends—and that they even had a home offered them: for Mrs. Selwyn had been with Lucy on the previous evening—she had sought the unhappy woman for the purpose of ministering to whatsoever wants she might have, and giving her the assurance that both herself and little Frederick would be welcomed beneath her roof. This assurance, too, she had been fully empowered to give by her husband—Mr. Selwyn;—and all these circumstances did Lucy now explain to Lonsdale. It was indeed a relief and a solace to the unhappy man to receive such intelligence: but in the most earnest manner did he again and again conjure his wife to live on for little Frederick’s sake.

At length the moment of separation came. How can we describe it? We cannot. We are lost in the presence of the immensity of that anguish—the illimitable extent of that despairing sorrow. Words are ineffectual: the mightiest power of language sinks into insignificance when viewed in comparison with the fearful eloquence of woe expressed in the looks, the

tears, the parting words, and the passionate kisses which took place then. Again and again did Lucy, after tearing herself away, rush back into her husband’s arms: again and again did they press each other in an embrace which they thought must be the last. But at length that *last embrace* was taken. They both felt that it was cruelly to one another to prolong the scene. They separated; and the closing door suddenly became as it were an adamantine wall—a barrier immense, insuperable—between the wildly distracted wife who went forth from the dungeon, and the despair-stricken husband who remained within its walls.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### CLIVE HALL.

MORE than eighteen months had elapsed since the visit which the Countess of Burton and her daughter Lady Adela Clive paid to the Manor House. During the whole of this interval they had remained at Clive Hall. Lady Adela had become of age, and was entitled to her fortune, amounting to twenty-five thousand pounds. The Countess had not suggested to her daughter to accept the suit of any new aspirant to her hand, since the sudden breaking-off of the contemplated match with Gerald Redburn. The Countess knew that Adela’s heart was engaged to Mr. Reginald Herbert, the nephew of Lord and Lady Stansfield; and her opinion was altogether changed in respect to that gentleman since he had become the presumptive heir to his uncle’s title and estates in consequence of the death of the Hon. Ferdinand Stansfield. Mr. Reginald Herbert, as the future Lord Stansfield, was a very different person in the Countess of Burton’s eyes from Mr. Reginald Herbert with a Government situation of only five hundred a-year and no other prospects. Therefore her ladyship was quite prepared to bestow her daughter upon Mr. Herbert if he presented himself to claim the young lady’s hand. And that he would do so the Countess fully expected; and therefore, after her return with Adela from the Manor House to Clive Hall, she rose every morning, saying to herself, “Surely he will come to-day?” But days, and weeks, and months passed by—and Mr. Reginald Herbert made not his appearance at the Hall.

And Adela—did not she also hope and expect that Reginald would come? She did: for her heart was entirely his own—her virgin affections were centred in him. But he was not different in her estimation, as the heir presumptive to a peerage and an estate, than when he was the mere Government official with a comparative small income and no prospects. She loved him then, and she loved him now: she loved him not better now than she loved him then—because she had all along loved with the utmost capacity of woman’s heart for the tender sentiment. But she had hoped that when a decent period of mourning had expired for his deceased cousin, Mr. Herbert would endeavour to see her



again. Not that any actual avowal of love had ever passed between them—much less any pledge or promise given: but still Adela knew that at the time he was staying at Clive Hall, she was not an object of indifference to him—and her heart told her that he had not failed to penetrate her own feelings. Then, wherefore did he not come? had he forgotten her? had the impression worn away? did he now love another? These were the questions which poor Adela was constantly asking herself in secret: but she was too generous-hearted, and had too good an opinion of the world, to suppose that the affection entertained by a young man of such noble disposition and lofty feelings as Reginald Herbert possessed, could be either vacillating or transitory.

The countess of Burton was constantly looking amongst the "Fashionable Intelligence" of the *Morning Post*, to which she was an inveterately regular subscriber, in order to ascertain something of the movements of the Stansfield family; and she had likewise written to her son the Earl of Burton in London, to inform her from time to time of anything he might hear on that subject. But she at first gleaned little from either source: the knowledge thus obtained was limited to these few details—that Mr. Herbert had resigned his Government situation—that he had taken up his abode altogether with his uncle and aunt—that by his kind and affectionate behaviour towards them he had consoled them for the loss of their son—and that they lived in a somewhat secluded manner at the fine old ancestral seat in one of the southern counties. But at length there were other pieces of intelligence which the Countess of Burton learnt: namely, that Mr. Reginald Herbert was not married—that it was believed he was not even paying his addresses to any young lady—that disliking society, he was addicted to solitary rambles—and that he was supposed to be afflicted with some secret melancholy. The Countess felt assured that he still cherished an affection for her daughter; and therefore, as time passed on and he neither came nor wrote, she marvelled more and more at his absence and his silence. She had a great mind to adopt some measure to revive her acquaintance with the Stansfields: but a coolness had naturally arisen from the circumstance of her so suddenly declining to bestow her daughter upon the Hon. Mr. Ferdinand; and she therefore felt that it would be indelicate to make the first overture towards a renewal of friendship.

Thus had the interval passed away since the visit paid by the Countess and Lady Adela to the Redburns at the Manor House; and while the mother was racking her brain for some expedient to let Reginald know that he might have her daughter for the asking, the daughter herself was becoming more and more desponding. She, too, was fond of solitary rambles: and during the bright days of summer—or on the frosty ones of winter—might she have been seen walking by herself for hours together in the spacious grounds attached to Clive Hall. She did not tell her mother what was preying upon her mind: nor did the mother breathe a syllable to Adela of what was passing in her

own in respect to Mr. Herbert. But there was one inmate of the Hall of whom Adela made a confidante; and this was Mrs. Browning, the old housekeeper, who had been for many long years in the family—who had witnessed Adela's birth—and who loved the young lady with quite a maternal affection. To her therefore had Adela breathed the tale of her love—or rather she had confessed it when questioned: and the kind-hearted Mrs. Browning did her best to banish the young lady's fears and to encourage her hopes. Therefore, when Adela was not rambling in the grounds—or when her presence was not required by the Countess—she would repair to the housekeeper's room; and taking her work with her, would sit and talk to the old dame on the one engrossing topic—that topic so dear to her heart!

We must now observe that the incident we are about to relate, occurred on that very self-same Friday which had witnessed the parting scene of agony between Frederick Lonsdale and his wife in the dungeon-cell at the Middleton barracks. It was about noon on that day—and the weather being unfavorable for walking, Lady Adela Clive took her work-basket, and repaired to Mrs. Browning's room. She was dressed in a plain morning gown, which came high up in the neck—indeed to the very throat; but the fashion of which set off the beautiful symmetry of her form to the best advantage. Her hair was arranged in bands—that hair whose raven blackness gave additional brilliancy to the transparent fairness of her complexion. She never had much color upon her cheeks: the little they had once possessed, had disappeared—and she was pale. In her eyes of deepest blue there was a melancholy expression; and the pensiveness into which she was wont to fall, gave a most touching interest to the whole of that beauteous countenance.

Seating herself in a chair near the old housekeeper, Adela made but a few casual remarks, relative to the dismal aspect of the weather; and then she pursued her needlework in silence. Mrs. Browning noticed that her beloved young lady was even sadder than she had recently been; and it pained her to observe this deepening despondency. She was about to bid her cheer up: but she felt—for the first time—that it almost amounted to a cruel mockery to encourage hopes where none appeared to exist; or at least where, judging by all circumstances, such hopes ought to be abandoned. So she said nothing—but sat watching with a mournful look the pensive countenance of the beautiful Adela.

Presently Mrs. Browning recollected that she had forgotten to give some instructions to the domestics below; and she quitted the room for the purpose. Adela suffered her work to droop upon her lap; and leaning back in the chair, with her head bent forward, she fell into a deep and mournful reverie. She had not failed to observe that on this occasion—and for the first time—the housekeeper had volunteered not a syllable to cheer her; and she could not help regarding the circumstance as ominous of the death of all hope. Ought she, then to think anything more of Reginald Herbert? or ought

she not to do her utmost to banish his image from her mind? Yes: her maidenly pride as well as her exquisite feminine delicacy told her that she ought. For the sake of her happiness, too, she felt that it was a duty she owed unto herself. But, ah! it was so easy to talk or to think of banishing that image—and so difficult to accomplish the aim! And her happiness, too—was not that already gone? was it not wrecked? how could it be restored?

In this deep and painful reverie did the beauteous Adela Clive remain wrapped up for a considerable time—she knew not how long—after the old housekeeper had left the room. Perhaps nearly half-an-hour had thus elapsed, when the door opened again. Adela scarcely noticed it, or if she did, she thought it was Mrs. Browning returning. She did not raise her eyes; she did not even endeavor to arouse herself from that desponding reverie. Footsteps were advancing slowly towards her; and then a voice spoke. But, heavens! that voice—it was not the housekeeper's—Oh, no! it was one which but a few moments back she thought she should never hear again!

"Lady Adela, pardon this intrusion," were the words spoken by that voice: and she could scarcely suppress a shriek of surprise or a cry of joy, as suddenly looking up, she beheld Reginald Herbert standing before her.

He was a fine, tall, handsome man of about six-and-twenty: his nobly-formed countenance beamed with intelligence—and the loftiest feelings were stamped upon the high and open forehead. He beheld that sudden start which Adela gave—he saw that his presence had sent a thrill of joy through her entire frame—suspense and fear were all in a moment banished from his heart—he knew that he was beloved as fondly and as faithfully as he himself had never ceased to love. But as no verbal avowal had ever taken place between them—as his lip had never even so much as touched her cheek—and naught but the gentle pressure of the hand, the looks that met and lingered in blending tenderness, and the sigh that was half subdued, had alone been the indications of the passion that was mutually felt, when upwards of three years back he was a guest at Clive Hall,—he did not feel himself as yet in the condition of an accepted suitor; although his heart was now dancing with the hope that ere many minutes elapsed he would be so.

"Lady Adela," he again said, "pardon this intrusion;"—and he took her hand. He felt that it trembled in his own; while the tell-tale blush upon the cheeks, the downcast looks, and the visible tremor which agitated her, were further indications, if any were wanting, of the happiness which his presence had suddenly infused into her soul. "If I have done wrong by intruding here," he continued, "you must blame your worthy housekeeper, and not me—for it was she who bade me come hither. Indeed, she brought me up to the very door; and—and—if she did not accompany me across the threshold," added Herbert, "it was, I suppose, because she fancied I had something particular to say."

Adela murmured a few words, assuring him

that it was no intrusion, and inviting him to be seated: but suddenly feeling that she ought not to display this embarrassment and confusion, she regained a certain degree of composure by dint of a strong effort, and said, "Will you not repair to the drawing-room, where we shall no doubt find my mother?"

"Will you permit me, Lady Adela," he asked, "to remain here with you for a few minutes? On my arrival I of course inquired for the Countess in the first instance, and was informed that her ladyship would join me in the drawing-room in a quarter of an hour. Then—pardon me if I displayed so much anxiety to see you—I inquired for *you*. The housekeeper was ascending the stairs at the moment. She took me under her charge, as I have already explained, and introduced me hither. Tell me then, Lady Adela, may I remain here a few minutes with you?"

There was an unmistakable tenderness in his looks as he thus addressed her, and that sort of delicate and refined familiarity in his tone, which showed that he felt he was not altogether an unwelcome intruder. It was a tone, too, in which a joyous hopefulness was breathed in the accents. It was the tone of love. Lady Adela felt her heart too full of emotions to allow her to give utterance to a single word. All her confusion returned; a delicious and pleasurable confusion, which was displayed in the roses that blushed upon her damask cheeks—in the bashful down-casting of the looks—and in the trembling of the hands as she mechanically took up her work again. She sat down. Reginald Herbert took the housekeeper's unoccupied chair which stood near; and bending forward, he continued to address her in those accents which had already wafted a tale of love to her ears by its very tones, though not as yet in the words it had uttered.

"Lady Adela," he said, "I hope that I shall not be deemed presumptuous in expressing my belief that I am not altogether an object of indifference to you; and equally sanguine is my hope that you will not be offended if I declare that for upwards of three years your image has never been absent from my mind."

He paused for a reply: but she gave none. She went on working; she plied her needle with a marvellous assiduity: one might have thought that she really had a certain task to perform in a given amount of time. But, ah! the tell-tale blush was deepening upon those damask cheeks as she bent over her work; her hand trembled; the very fluttering of her heart was plainly audible. Never was confusion more exquisitely delicious for a lover to behold: never was it in itself more eloquent in reciprocating an avowal of affection.

"O Adela!" said Mr. Herbert, in playful tenderness, "do not devote to that invidious work the attention which I seek to monopolize altogether for myself. What! you will not put it down? you persist in playing that odious needle—although I have come so many long miles to throw myself at your feet. It is cruel of you, Adela—dear Adela—too cruel!"—and he raised his finger in the same mood of playful tenderness that he had been adopting: for his



heart was bounding with joy and delight; he knew that he was wooing one who would become his bride.

And the work did drop suddenly from Lady Adela's hands. Their eyes met: he caught those hands—he pressed them to his lips—he fell upon his knees before her—and in terms of manly earnestness and frank sincerity did he proclaim his passion. The affirmative was breathed in his ear,—breathed in that soft-silvery voice whose accents sank down like the most delicious music into his soul; and rising from his suppliant posture, he clasped the blushing maiden in his arms.

Then followed certain explanations on his part. While he was only the Government official, with a slender income and with no bright prospects to contemplate, he had not dared openly to declare his love—no, not even after the suit of his cousin Ferdinand Stansfield had been rejected. And when that cousin's death so suddenly altered his position and made him the heir presumptive to a proud title and immense estates, the rumor had reached him that Lady Adela had become engaged to Captain Redburn—so that his heart was smitten with despondency. It was only within the last few days, and by mere accident, that another report upon the subject had come to his ears,—a report of a far different and more cheering character, to the effect that the former one was unfounded, and that Lady Adela was still unwedded—still disengaged. Then, with the full and free consent of Lord and Lady Stansfield, he had sped to Clive Hall to proclaim his love and to proffer his suit.

By the time the preceding explanations were given, worthy Mrs. Browning, the housekeeper, ventured to peep into the room. As the reader may well imagine, she had her own good reasons for sending Mr. Herbert up to that apartment, where he might find the object of his visit. She knew that if poor Adela had been sinking into despondency and beginning to pine away, Reginald was the only physician upon earth whose presence could bring her back to health and spirits; and that in the language which he might breath in her ears, there would be a talismanic power of an infallible quality. Therefore, when Mrs. Browning looked into the room, and perceived the lovers gazing upon each other with smiling fondness and a soft caressing joy in their looks, the heart of the old housekeeper bounded with delight, and she almost felt herself young again at the interesting spectacle. As she advanced into the room with an arch smile on her venerable countenance, Adela sprang towards her—embraced her with affectionate gratitude—and in a few murmuring words, thanked her for all the consolation she had proffered, and the hopes which almost until the very last she had prophetically held out, and which were at length receiving their fulfilment.

Within the hour that was passing, Reginald Herbert had formally solicited of the Countess her daughter's hand in marriage; and to her ladyship did he repeat the explanations, to account for his absence and his silence, which he had already given to the charming and well-

beloved Adela. The Countess, as the reader may be assured, did not reject the suit of Reginald Herbert on behalf of her daughter; and thus happiness was again fully restored within the precincts of Clive Hall.

Mr. Herbert had travelled post from his uncle's mansion in one of the southern counties as far as Middleton, which was the nearest large town to Clive Hall; and having rested there the previous night, he had on the forenoon of this day of which we are speaking, hired a horse at the hotel where he put up, and had ridden across to the Hall, which was only a few miles distant. He was of course invited to pass the remainder of the day with the Countess and his intended bride: but, for obvious reasons, he could not be asked to take up his quarters altogether at the mansion during his contemplated stay in the neighborhood. The time passed away so agreeably in the society of his beloved, that it was not until a late hour in the evening that he thought of taking his departure. Indeed, the time-piece on the mantel in the drawing-room proclaimed the hour of eleven, when he fancied it could not possibly be more than nine; and it was not before he had referred to his own watch that he could bring himself to believe the *ornolu* clock was correct. A domestic was then summoned to order the horse to be immediately got in readiness; and in a few minutes Reginald Herbert was in the saddle, having taken leave of Adela and the Countess, with the understanding that he was to ride over to breakfast on the following morning.

It was a beautiful moonlit night in the month of January: the ground was hard as marble with the frost—the air was crisp and cold, but without a raw bleakness. Upon the leafless hedges and the skeleton boughs of the trees, the white tracery of the frost-work gleamed in the argentine flood which poured down from a brilliant moon and its company of countless stars: the trampling of the horse's hoofs on the hard road sent forth the only sounds that broke the silence of the night. At first Reginald Herbert, well wrapped up in a winter-coat, urged the steed to a galloping pace, in order to keep off as much as possible the intenseness of the cold, and quicken his own blood as well as that of the animal into a glowing circulation. But after awhile he drew in the reins and slackened the horse's pace to a walk: for the steam was ascending from its sides in vapory whiteness around him.

He had probably been proceeding at this diminished rate for about five minutes, when he observed some dark object by the side of the road at a little distance, and appearing to be a man sitting on a bank. As he drew nearer, he found his conjecture right; for the object proved to be a man, who rising up, began to walk in the direction from which Herbert was coming. As he approached, Reginald perceived that he walked with difficulty, as if dragging himself along; and supposing him to be some destitute person overcome with fatigue—perhaps homeless and destitute—he resolved to offer him pecuniary succor: for Mr. Herbert possessed a most generous heart, which was easily moved by the spectacle of poverty and distress. The man

was now close enough for Reginald to observe that he was clad in rags, and that he had neither shoes nor stockings on his feet. So he pulled in his horse to a halt,—and said, “My poor fellow, you seem in great distress: wait a moment, and I will relieve you.”

“Thank you, sir—thank you,” answered the man hastily, and in a somewhat strange and excited tone: but still he did not stop. As he spoke, however, he half-turned and partially raised his countenance towards Mr. Herbert, who for a few instants was so shocked by the revolting aspect of this face, that he could not give utterance to a word. It was a face seeming rather to belong to some unnatural monster than to a man; but as it has been before described to our readers, we need not enter upon the loathsome task of delineating it anew.

“Why don’t you stop?” exclaimed Herbert, recovering his self-possession, and angry with himself that he should even by his temporary silence have appeared to revolt from the presence of that wretched being. “Here is something for you?”—and thrusting his hand into his pocket, he drew forth several pieces of silver.

“Thank you, sir—thank you kindly,” said the stranger, now retracing the few steps he had taken past the spot where Mr. Herbert had pulled in his horse: and extending his hand, but without again raising his countenance, he received the liberal donation: then without another word he continued his way in a manner as if he were dragging himself along with a painful degree of haste.

Mr. Herbert was so much struck by the peculiarity of this individual’s manner that he remained looking back at him for more than a minute: then urging on the horse again, he said to himself, “Poor fellow, distress and suffering appear to have half crazed him.”

In a short time Middleton was reached; and Reginald, forgetting the incident which had occurred on the road, and thinking only of the beautiful Adela Clive, hastened to seek his comfortable couch at the hotel where he had taken up his quarters.

At eight o’clock in the morning he was once more on horseback; and by nine he alighted at the entrance of Clive Hall. A groom was in readiness to receive the horse, and a footman to escort its rider to the breakfast-parlor. Adela was already there, with joy dancing in her eyes as she hastened forward to welcome her lover; and the Countess of Burton soon made her appearance. But scarcely had they all three sat down to breakfast, when a footman entered the room in a somewhat hasty and excited manner,—and said, “My lady, there is a strange man just been found in the out-house at the end of the meadow; and he seems to be dying. He is badly wounded; and what with loss of blood and the cold, he is in a very deplorable state. Such a dreadful object too!”—and the domestics shuddered visibly as he spoke.

“A person dying!” exclaimed Adela, impulsively anticipating in the generosity of her heart whatsoever orders her mother might be disposed to give upon the subject. “Let him at once be brought into the house—let him be

taken care of—let medical assistance be sent for.”

“To be sure,” cried the Countess: “let all this be done—and done quickly. It must never be said that we suffered a poor creature to die as it were at our very door.”

“I will myself go and superintend the proceeding,” exclaimed Mr. Herbert, starting from his seat: for in consequence of what the footman had said, the incident of the previous night was suddenly recalled to his memory; and it struck him that the unfortunate being now spoken of, was the same wretched object whom he himself had encountered and relieved. He accordingly hastened from the breakfast parlor, followed by the footman; and passing round to the rear of the spacious mansion, they hurried to the outhouse, which was about two hundred yards distant. It was a sort of shed where the huge roller for the meadows and several garden implements of a heavy kind were wont to be kept: and there the object of all this benevolent solicitude had been found by one of the menials of the household. Three or four of the servants were already upon the spot, when Herbert, followed by the footman, reached it; and every necessary succor was being rendered to the miserable man, who proved, as Reginald had conjectured, to be the same that he had met in the road on the previous night. He had a wound on the side of the head—another on the shoulder; and by the state of his tattered garments it was evident that he had lost a great deal of blood. When first found, it appeared that he was in a state of complete inanimation—and his limbs were as rigid as if he had been frozen with the cold. Brandy was now being administered to him; and the domestics seemed to lose sight of the loathsome ugliness of his countenance, in their generous zeal to save the life of a fellow creature. The spark of existence was not extinct; but the miserable being continued insensible of all that was passing around him. By Mr. Herbert’s order he was at once conveyed towards the Hall, and borne into the nearest convenient chamber belonging to the domestics’ department of the mansion. His rags were stripped off him; and he was placed in a comfortable bed, warmed with a pan of coals for his reception. The administration of proper restoratives was continued; and a messenger was despatched on horseback to the nearest village to fetch the surgeon,—bandages being in the meanwhile placed on the severe wounds which the man had received. He lived—he was recovering gradually—but remained unconscious of all that was going on.

When the first hurry and bustle attendant upon all these proceedings had somewhat subsided, and as Mr. Herbert was about to leave the room where he had personally superintended them, his attention was directed by one of the footmen to certain objects which had fallen out of the pocket of the man’s tattered garments as they were stripped off him. These things consisted of a handsome purse, well filled with gold and silver—several loose silver coins, no doubt those that Herbert had himself placed in his hand on the previous



night—and a letter of the form and dimensions of an official despatch. The circumstance that the man should be so severely wounded,—the wounds themselves appearing like sword-cuts,—had already struck Herbert and all the others present as exceedingly suspicious, though it had not checked the course of their humane and philanthropic exertions: but their suspicions were not merely aggravated—they seemed almost to be confirmed—by the fact of that handsome and well-filled purse being found in the possession of so poverty stricken an object. Reginald took the letter which the footman handed him, and at once perceived by the usual formulary that it was “On His Majesty’s Service.” It was directed to “Lieutenant-Colonel Wyndham, —th Regiment of Infantry, Middleton.” The seal, which was that of the Horse Guards, was broken; and therefore without another moment’s hesitation did Mr. Herbert proceed to make himself acquainted with the contents of the despatch, thinking that it might probably throw some light on the circumstances of the suspected stranger.

That letter contained a reprieve for Frederick Lonsdale!

“Let the horse be got in readiness this moment!” was the instantaneous order issued by Herbert, who suddenly became dreadfully excited. “Or rather, saddle me the fleetest belonging to her ladyship. Quick! quick! there is not a moment to lose! My God! the life of a fellow-creature depends upon it—and I may yet be too late!”

For this was Saturday—and Mr. Herbert recollected having heard on the previous day at Middleton, that a soldier was to be executed on this very morning, in the barrack-yard, though the hour had not been specifically mentioned.

He rushed back into the mansion—he burst into the breakfast-parlor—and in a few hurried words explained to the Countess and Adela wherefore he was about to take horse and gallop with all possible speed to Middleton.—Scarcely were his explanations given to the dismayed and affrighted ladies, who, as well as himself, were horrified lest he should be too late,—a footman entered to announce that the horse was in readiness. Reginald Herbert hurried away—sprang into the saddle—and at once impelled the steed into the swiftest pace that it was capable of putting forth.

It was ten o’clock when he thus dashed away from Clive Hall—three quarters of an hour would bring him to Middleton. Should he be too late?

## CHAPTER XI.

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At about seven o’clock in the morning of this Saturday of which we are writing, Adjutant Scott proceeded to Colonel Wyndham’s apartments, and was at once shown into the dressing-room where the commanding-officer was in the middle of his toilet.

“Any news, Colonel?” asked the Adjutant,

the moment he was thus ushered into Wyndham’s presence.

“None,” was the response. “But there are three good hours yet: and moreover there is the post to arrive. Not that I think such a document, if it is really to come, would be entrusted to the post-office——”

“Did you not tell me, Colonel,” interrupted the Adjutant, “that Sir Archibald Redburn was interesting himself in this matter?”

“Yes: and Captain Redburn went over to the Manor yesterday expressly to await his father’s return from London. He said,” continued Colonel Wyndham, “that he hoped to be back at night.”

“That is last night, you mean?” observed the Adjutant inquiringly.

“Exactly so: and from what he said, I certainly expected him. It appears that Sir Archibald has been using all his interest—and that is not a little—with the Horse Guards to get this fellow off.”

“And you sent a recommendation to mercy, did you not?” inquired the Adjutant.

“Oh! of course,” answered the Colonel.—“Redburn told me that his father had known Lonsdale ever since he was a child—that he had been brought up at Oakleigh, which is on the family estate, and that the Baronet did not like the idea of one of *his people*, as he calls them, dying in such a way. So he sent Redburn to ask me to interfere.”

“It’s all right and proper enough,” observed the Adjutant. “One does these kind of things to oblige persons of Sir Archibald Redburn’s rank and standing.”

“Precisely so,” said Wyndham; but he did not think it all necessary to add that he had not signed the recommendation to mercy before Captain Redburn promised him another loan of a thousand guineas.

“I presume, Colonel,” said the Adjutant, “that I am to issue the necessary orders just as if no reprieve were expected?”

“Unquestionably,” replied Wyndham: “and if we hear nothing by ten o’clock, the sentence must of course be carried out. Under circumstances, we can stretch half-an-hour so as to give the fellow a last chance.”

“Then I will counter-order it from ten o’clock, and specify half past,” said the Adjutant: and the Colonel having nodded approvingly as he wiped his razor on the shaving-cloth, Mr. Scott issued from the room.

Two hours passed; and a little after nine o’clock, as Colonel Wyndham was discussing his muffins and chocolate, with other delicacies, at the breakfast-table, his letters were brought in and placed by his side. He took them up—turned them over one after the other—but perceived amongst them no despatch bearing above the address the formulary of “On His Majesty’s Service.”

“Any intelligence yet?” inquired Scott, once more making his appearance.

“None,” responded Wyndham: but to make perfectly sure, he opened the letters—glanced at the signatures—and repeated the word,

“None.”

“And Redburn not come back?”

"No. He told me," continued the Colonel, "that he must wait for his father's return from London under any circumstances. What o'clock is it now? Half past nine," added Wyndham, after consulting his watch. "Well, there is a good hour—an hour and a quarter we may call it, considering the preliminaries which will take place after the troops are drawn up."

"An hour and a quarter," repeated the Adjutant,—*"a precious close shave! I should not like it to be myself!"*

"No—nor I," rejoined the Colonel, helping himself to another cup of chocolate.

Another hour elapsed: it was now half past ten o'clock—and no intelligence had been received. Captain Redburn came not: neither letter nor message reached the Colonel in respect to the sentence pronounced on Frederick Lonsdale. He looked forth from his window: the regiment was drawn up in the spacious barrack-yard; and his presence was now alone awaited in order that the awful ceremony might be proceeded with. He accordingly descended into the yard; and the Adjutant accosted him with the wonted salute, to receive his final orders.

"I have heard nothing, Scott," said Wyndham. "We must go on. Have you picked out the firing-party?"

"Yes, sir," replied the Adjutant: "fourteen in all."

"Some from each company, I suppose?" said Wyndham, inquiringly.

"Yes, sir. I left it to Langley's discretion—and he has chosen eight of the oldest hands and six youngsters. They have all received their instructions."

"To keep themselves steady and take good aim?" remarked the Colonel. "But the signals—are they agreed upon?"

"The Drum-Major, sir, whose duty it is to give them, has made all arrangements with the firing-party. Everything will be properly understood between them."

"Then let the Major proceed, Scott," said the Colonel: and the Adjutant hastened to convey his instructions to the officer alluded to.

The regiment, when taking its station on the parade-ground, was drawn up in companies: the command was now given by the Major for them to wheel into line; and the firing-party was marched to the front. The aspect of the soldiery was at that moment deeply and solemnly interesting. Every countenance was pale, with an expression of mingled anxiety and awe upon it: every one who glanced at his comrade, beheld in his features the reflection of his own feelings. The sentiment of commiseration for Fredrick Lonsdale, and of horror at the punishment about to be inflicted, was all but universal,—some of the officers and non-commissioned officers constituting the only exceptions. Though the full measure of the wrongs and persecutions which our hero had endured, was not known,—yet a sufficiency had come to the knowledge of his fellow soldiers to make them regard him as the victim of a long series of cruel misfortunes and bitter tyrannies, rather than as a wilful and wicked offender against the laws of military discipline. They therefore felt that it was as a

martyr, and not as a culprit, he was about to undergo the sentence that had been pronounced upon him.

Immediately after the firing-party had been moved to the front of the line, Frederick Lonsdale was brought out, under a small escort, from the guard-house. He was dressed in his uniform, but without his shako, his cross-belts, and side-arms. His countenance was pale as death—that death which he was advancing to meet: but he walked with head erect, with a firm step and with a resolute expression of countenance. Those who had seen him twice flogged and once branded, felt assured that he would not flinch now: they were right. The moment he appeared upon the parade-ground, his eyes swept over the scene that met them: it was awful and imposing to a degree. All that pomp of military parade—that force of eight hundred men, marshalled for the purpose of beholding one humble individual done to death! He beheld compassionate sympathy and harrowing suspense depicted upon almost every countenance. For a moment he felt touched by those evidences of sympathy on the part of his comrades: the next instant he nerved himself with an iron fortitude,—for the other was a feeling to which he dared not give way.

With looks as firm as his steps, did he advance towards the centre of the yard; and there he stopped short. He knew that it was his privilege—the last he could claim on earth—to address a few words to the parade; and he purposed to avail himself of it. This was a moment of even a more profound suspense and a more awful anxiety for the assembled soldiery than they had before experienced: it seemed to them as if they were about to listen to the words of a dead man! There was a silence as deep and as solemn as if some spell had suddenly alighted upon all who had gathered there,—turning them into statues. A pin might have been heard to drop on the hard frozen ground where the troops were drawn up. The breath was suspended: the very pulses themselves seemed to have ceased to beat. All was still and silent: but yet there was a terrible amount of keenly active and acutely felt vitality expressed on the countenances along whose pale array Lonsdale's eyes slowly travelled. At length that solemn pause—that dread silence—was broken.

"Friends and comrades," said the doomed man, speaking in a firm voice, and which without vociferating effort penetrated to the remotest corner of the immense barrack-yard, "you see before you one whose eyes in a few swift brief minutes will be closed in death—whose heart will have ceased to beat—whose form will be reduced to a mere lump of clay. I am about to appear in the presence of a higher tribunal than that whose sentence has placed me here to die; and if I tremble at the thought of so soon standing before that sublime judgment-seat, it is not on account of that deed for which the earthly one of the other day has condemned me. No: it is because I feel that whatever faults I may have committed, have been offences against those who provoked them



not—who merited them not. I allude to the best of wives—to the dearest of children."

Here his voice faltered for a few moments, and tears dimmed his eyes. Tears too were trickling down the pale cheeks of those in the serried rank; and the sob which rose up into the throat of many a soldier there, found a similarly half stifled echo in that of a comrade standing next. But Lonsdale, hastily dashing away his own tears, drew himself suddenly up, as if to show that having resolved to be firm, he would be; and then his speech was continued thus:—

"And yet I scarcely tremble at the thought of appearing before that celestial judgment-seat: for the Almighty who sitteth there, can attest that the only errors of my life have been those to which I ere now alluded, and which redound upon my wife and child. That angel-wife of mine has forgiven me in her own name and in that of our son. Yes—by *them* I am forgiven: and my Maker will not show me less mercy than I have experienced at their hands. I stand not here to admit the justice of my sentence: I proclaim it to be unjust! About to appear in the presence of One at whose footstool no falsehood may be told, I speak to you now as if I were already kneeling there: I speak to you as if I were in the presence of my God. I declare, then, that the evidence which Captain Redburn bore against me—and the evidence which Mr. Langley bore against me—were both alike colored, tortured, and exaggerated, so as to bring about this catastrophe. But upon that subject I will say no more. Did I choose to open the floodgates of animosities and upbraidings, I might pour forth a torrent that would overwhelm the many, many enemies I have had to encounter since the fatal day I became a soldier. But if a sense of bitter, bitter wrong will not permit me, even in this supreme moment, to say that I forgive those enemies—if human nature asserts its empire even until the very last instant when it is about to dissolve away—yet do I earnestly and entreatingly implore heaven to touch their hearts and lead them, when I am gone, to be more merciful, more forbearing, more christian-like towards others who shall remain subject to their authority. Friends and comrades, I have little more to say. It is only this:—that had circumstances of war ever called us to mingle in scenes of strife, I should have borne my part as a brave man—I should not have shrunk from where perils were greatest and dangers were thickest. Imagine not, therefore, my heart will fail me now that in a few short minutes I shall meet Death face to face!"

Lonsdale ceased; but there was not altogether a dead silence now—for the sobs of many and many of the soldiers were plainly audible. The doomed man, turning round, walked slowly—but with head erect and firm footsteps—to a greater distance from the line; and he halted about twenty feet in front of a coffin, which had been silently and stealthily borne on the ground and placed there while he was in the midst of his speech. His looks did not quail when, on turning round, he caught sight of that sinister object: he knew that it would be there—he

was prepared to behold it; and even if it were otherwise, his fortitude was nerved to a degree well calculated to shield him against a sudden shock. Taking off his red coat, he threw it upon the ground—and then sank on his knees, his hands clasped in silent prayer. A soldier, especially appointed for the purpose, approached him as noiselessly as if treading in the chamber of death, and advancing up to the couch of death itself; and proceeded to fasten a bandage over his eyes. At the same time he whispered, "Lonsdale, forgive me for having any share in these proceedings: but I cannot help it!"

"I forgive you, my poor friend," was the low and solemnly uttered response of the doomed man. "You are but an automaton, as every one is who enters the ranks of the army. Farewell! God bless you!"

"God bless you," murmured the weeping soldier, as he pressed the hand which Lonsdale stretched out. He then withdrew; and our hero, again joining his hands, abandoned himself altogether to his devotions,—praying for heaven to have mercy upon his own soul, and not to desert the wife and the child whom he was leaving behind.

Immediately Lonsdale had knelt down, the Drum Major of the regiment, who had stationed himself near the firing-party, gave a peculiar flourish of his cane; and the fourteen soldiers who were selected to perform the hideous part of executioners, advanced to a stack of muskets immediately in front of them—and each took a piece. There were fourteen of these weapons—as many muskets as there were men in the firing party: and it was known that but thirteen were loaded with ball, and one with powder only. This contemptible device for cheating each individual into the belief that it was he himself who held the musket containing the blank cartridge, was the most signal proof that could possibly be afforded of the consciousness of those who inflict the extreme rigors of military discipline, how revolting it is to human nature to make men the executioners of their fellow man. The firing-party had been as profoundly touched as any of the rest by Lonsdale's speech: each and all of those fourteen soldiers would have flung down the weapons of death if they dared, and vowed that though they would fight their enemies in battle, it was an outrage to their feelings to ask them to murder a friend in cold blood. But, no: they dared not!—those living automatons had no power of volition: it was their's only to *obey*!

When the fourteen men of the firing-party had taken their fourteen muskets, and had promptly formed themselves into a rank again—all this taking place in the deepest silence—there was a pause more dreadful than can be described. But it was a pause of only a few moments. The Drum Major, again fixing his eyes earnestly and expressively upon them,—and satisfied that the looks of them all were rivetted upon him,—gave the second signal; namely, another flourish of his cane. It was likewise the last! The fourteen muskets were raised and levelled: another pause, but only of three moments—and then the loud report of the fire-arms struck quick and sharp upon every

ear. Lonsdale's hands were thrown upward, and he fell heavily upon his back. The spasmodic shudder which simultaneously quivered along the whole line, was something not merely to be *seen*—but likewise to be *heard*!

The victim was not dead. Though pierced by several balls, life yet lingered in him; his hands waved like the fins of a fish when taken out of the water and in the last agonies of death. The Drum Major had four more loaded muskets at hand; these he promptly ordered the four oldest and steadiest of the firing-party to take. They obeyed him—obeyed also the few rapidly whispered instructions he gave; and hastening towards the prostrate form of their comrade, they placed the muzzles to his head and poured in the last volley, crashing his skull and scattering his brains upon the ground where he lay. If the former acts of the tragedy were hideous and horrible, this last one was satanic, hellish, and damnable!

Promptly was the word of command given for the line to break by falling back into companies; and the next order was to "march past in slow time." As each company came in a line with the body, the word was given to "mark time"—which is a process of lifting the feet but bringing them back to the spot whence they were raised, so that the *corps* while thus engaged makes no advance. The order "Eyes Left" was then issued, for the purpose of compelling the company thus marking time to fix their eyes upon the corpse which lay brained and skull-shattered there. Oh, the refinements of infernal cruelty to which the military code has reached! Oh, the essence of all imaginable horrors which it has succeeded in concentrating! Could it be supposed that the spectacle of that murdered and mangled man would make the beholders virtuous and good? No—such was not the intention; but it was to produce a mechanized and slavish obedience under the terrorism of a frightful example.

While the regiment was thus marching past in slow time, each company being successively compelled to pause and gaze in the manner described on the slaughtered victim, the quick galloping tramp of a horse's hoofs was heard, from the outside of the barrack-wall, approaching the gates, which had been closed during the execution. The sentinel who stood there, instinctively struck with the idea that it was some messenger of authority approaching, flung open those gates; and Reginald Herbert galloped into the barrack-yard. But the instant his eyes encountered the spectacle of death, he threw up his arms in despair,—exclaiming in a voice of rending agony, "Oh, it is too late!"

A fearful sensation seized upon all present: the troops came to a dead halt without any word of command to that effect. Every one understood what it was. A reprieve had arrived—but as its bearer had proclaimed in that anguished tone, it had come too late!

Colonel Wyndham was the first to rush up to the spot where Mr. Herbert threw himself from his horse, a prey to all the horrible feelings of a man who has hoped to do a good deed, but who is baffled in the attempt. Almost frantic,

he gave the Colonel the despatch; but while this officer was yet reading it, another circumstance of mingled horror and mystery transpired, to divert somewhat the attention of all present in that barrack-yard from the other dread incidents of the hour that was passing.

Through the gates, which had been thrown open for Mr. Herbert, an ominous *cortege* began to make its way. Several laborers supported a hurdle upon their shoulders; and in this lay an object, which, though covered up with some rude kind of cloth, was nevertheless unmistakably a corpse. A crowd of dismayed and horrified spectators thronged in the rear of the working-men and their burthen. The sentinel suffered the latter to pass, but sternly bade the multitude keep back. Colonel Wyndham and other officers, accompanied by Mr. Herbert, hastened to learn whose corpse it was which was thus borne into the barrack-yard. The men deposited the hurdle upon the ground—the covering was taken off—and the horrified ejaculation of "Captain Redburn!" burst forth from the lips of the officers.

It was a ghastly spectacle. Gerald was in his undress uniform, just as he had quitted the barracks on the preceding day to ride across to the Manor: his garments were saturated with water, and were soiled with mud and slime. His sword was gone from its sheath. One side of his head appeared to be completely beaten in; and his features were horribly disfigured, as if he had received murderous blows even on the very face. His pockets had been rifled, with the exception of his watch, which was inside the breast of his buttoned-up surtout-coat; so that it had either escaped the assassin's notice—or else the murderer must have been alarmed in the midst of the despoiling process and taken precipitately to flight. The tale of the laboring men who had borne the body to the barracks, was soon told. They were at work ere now, in a field about two miles from Middleton, and which was separated by a deep slimy ditch from the main road leading to Oakleigh—when one of them fancied he saw a human hand projecting out of the muddy water. This led to a search; and the body of Captain Redburn was drawn out upon the bank. In the road close by there were indications of a struggle having taken place, and also of the corpse having been dragged from the spot where the conflict had evidently occurred, to that part of the ditch in which it was found immersed.

When the working-men's tale was told, Col. Wyndham hastily inquired of Mr. Herbert how he became possessed of the reprieve? Reginald's explanations were alike promptly given; and it thus became evident that the murderer of Gerald Redburn could be no other than the monster-looking man whom he had so recently left at Clive Hall. For everything was but too terribly clear now! Sir Archibald Redburn must have returned on the preceding night to the Manor, bearing the reprieve with him—Gerald, in pursuance of the purpose for which he had gone home, had set off to bear the precious document to Middleton—he had been waylaid and murdered on the road—his assassin had fled with the despatch, and thus had caused the



death of Frederick Lonsdale in addition to that of Redburn!

All this was appalling and horrible—a hideous and frightful complication of tragedies and crimes. But there was one more scene of marked interest yet to occur: for scarcely had all those explanations been mutually given and listened to by the group gathered round the hurdle whereon the dead body lay, when Sir Archibald Redburn, mounted on a framing horse, galloped into the barrack-yard. He had been startled into horrible misgivings and flung into a terrible dismay about a couple of hours back, by the circumstance of the horse which his son had ridden on the previous evening, having been found wandering in the fields near Oakleigh; and as one of the stirrups was broken, his first and most natural thought was that Gerald had been thrown, and either killed, or else so seriously injured, that he had not the power to regain possession of the steed, which had accordingly strayed away until instinct had led the animal to the neighborhood most familiar to it. For we should observe that it was not Captain Redburn's own horse on which he had set off on the preceding night from the Manor: it was one belonging to his father—and hence the return of the steed to the neighborhood of its own stable. Without loss of time Sir Archibald Redburn had ridden over to Middleton in a state of the acutest suspense; and he arrived to behold the corpse of his son stretched at one extremity of the barrack-yard, and the corpse of Frederick Lonsdale—that son's victim—at the other!

"My God, my God! there is retribution in all this!" exclaimed the unhappy man: and he would have fallen headling from his horse, had not those near rushed forward to catch him in their arms.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### THE WIDOW AND THE ORPHAN.

UPON her knees in her humble chamber, and with little Frederick also kneeling by her side, was Lucy Lonsdale, while the incidents of the preceding chapter were taking place. She was praying that heaven would sustain her unhappy husband in the fortitude of Christian piety and manly resignation to the last: and she was teaching her son to pray also for that father whom he would never behold again. The poor boy comprehended this: he understood that never more in this life would he look his sire in the face; but beyond that he knew nothing. He conceived not how this was to be; and yet with some instinctive feeling of awe and consternation, he dared not ask his poor afflicted mother the question. Not for worlds would she suffer him to know—at least yet awhile—how his father was being done to death by his fellow-men under the color of the law: she preferred to leave him in vague, and dim, and misty uncertainty upon the hideous subject. For the most part the language of her prayer was solemnly collected and lucidly continuous: for her's was

now sorrow too profound—too immense—to find a vent in passionate ebullitions. For these are accompanied by tears—and tears are a relief: but such relief was denied to the unhappy Lucy. It was not a mere wound productive of bitter anguish which she had received: it was a shock—crushing, overwhelming, and prostrating—which she had sustained.

But at intervals she took her boy in her arms—strained him to her bosom—and held him tightly there for many minutes, without relaxing her hold upon his form. Then she would cease praying and gaze upon him in the dismal dreary blankness of despair. Still not a tear stole down her cheeks: her's was a sorrow past all weeping. Weeping!—Oh, it is a luxury for those who are afflicted: it relieves the surcharged heart of half its load!—Yes—there is a luxury in tears; and therefore Lucy knew it not. She did not rave—she burst not forth into frenzied excess—she gave not way to maniac wildness. Through all those phases of woe had she passed on former occasions,—when Lonsdale was ensnared by Langley at Oakleigh—when her father sought to coerce her into marriage with Gerald Redburn—each time that her husband was betrayed as a deserter by the villain Bates—each time too that he was lacerated by the scourge—and many, many times when he had maltreated her during the last year: these were her experiences of the wild bitterness and rending tortures of affliction. But it was otherwise now. Physical pains rack the body until it sinks into an insensibility to additional excruciation; so do the barbed irons of moral torture enter into the soul until its feelings sink into numbness with the excess of their own ineffable agony. Thus was it with Lucy Lonsdale. There was one object which now held her to life—and this was her son. Save and except in respect to him, the whole world, with its swarming millions of inhabitants—its business and its bustle—its conflicting passions and its jarring interests—its pains and its pleasures—was but a mere blank. She might live on for the sake of that child—she might toil for him—but it would be mechanically: she would breathe, and move, and perform the functions of existence—but it would be without consciousness: she would know not the world around her—and the world would only know her as a lon and desolate being, whose blighted hopes and ruined heart would permit her to take no share in its occupations nor to sympathize with its enjoyments. Such was the state in which she felt herself to be.

And Lucy knelt and prayed in her humble chamber—and the boy knelt by her side. She knew not the exact hour at which the execution of her husband was to take place: she had not dared ask the question of him at their farewell meeting—she had not dared ask it of any other. But she had learnt enough to make her aware that all would be over at least by eleven o'clock or that forenoon: and therefore she continued praying until eleven. Then, as the sound sent forth by the iron tongue of Time from the neighboring church, told her that the hour was come—that it was eleven o'clock—she knew that she was a widow: she knew that her boy was fatherless! She rose from her knees: her

movements were languid, dull, heavy, and slow: her look was not exactly vacant—it was one of blank consternation and appalled dismay. Another long, long embrace did she bestow upon the boy: or rather she held him in her arms tightly clasped,—both still and motionless for many minutes. It was like a statutory group personifying illimitable woe in the tenement of despair.

Presently she moved again. This time it was to open a box and take forth two dresses—one for herself, one for her son. They were deep black—mourning garments, which she had been preparing for two days past, and for the possession of which she was indebted to the bounty of Mrs. Selwyn. She apparelled her boy in his black raiment—she put on her own—and she said to herself that never more, so long as life might last, would she wear aught save the widow's weeds.

Scarcely was this toilet to commemorate the dead completed, when she heard a knock at the chamber-door. It had been preceded by the sounds of footsteps: but her ear had caught them not. Now she remembered that Mrs. Selwyn had on the previous day besought permission to pass *this* day with her—but that she had refused, observing that it was a day which she and her son must pass alone together. The same with the Sunday, when she would follow her husband's remains to the grave. But she had promised that on the Monday she would receive her kind friend. Such was the arrangement; but now the idea occurred to her that Martha, contravening her wishes for the best and kindest purposes, had come nevertheless. In a voice that was deep, low, and solemn, she bade whoever it were to enter. The door opened slowly: Sir Archibald Redburn, accompanied by a gentleman whom Lucy knew not, entered the chamber. For a moment a look of unconquerable aversion flashed from her eyes as they encountered the features of the Baronet—the man who was the first persecutor of her deceased husband—whose conduct, in depriving him of work, had proved the first link of the entire chain of calamities which had found an end this day at the muzzle of the soldiers' muskets. And that man too—was he not the father of Gerald Redburn, who had been a still more rancorous persecutor of her husband? Yes: and Lucy's heart was warped, so that she could not be magnanimous any longer—but she would visit the sins of the son upon the father, as well as those of the father upon the son. Yet the look of aversion which she thus threw upon the Baronet was only transient, though the feeling which prompted it remained: the next moment her countenance settled down into the fixed expression of a sorrow so dreary and dismal—so profound—that it was even beyond despair itself.

"Mrs. Lonsdale," said the Baronet, in a strange trembling voice, the accents of which appeared indeed a most melancholy corroboration of the words he went on to utter,—"you see before you a broken-hearted man—a man who would fly at once from the world—would bury himself in the solitude of his own chamber—who has no spirit left for any earthly pur-

pose,—were it not that he felt he had a duty to perform—a duty which must not be delayed another minute: and that duty has brought him hither. Mrs. Lonsdale," she continued, in a tone of still deeper woe, "you see before you a father who had just come from gazing on the corpse of his murdered son, and who feels that it was a righteous retribution decreed by heaven itself! Yes—it is so. Gerald—the hope of a life—is no more! I am childless—I am broken-hearted. But enough!—I come to offer you a home—a home for yourself—a home for your boy—a home where at least the cold hand of poverty will never more be laid upon your shoulders, and where those with whom you are to dwell, will surround you both with the kindest and tenderest sympathies. Mrs. Lonsdale will you accept this home that I offer?"

But Lucy gazed upon him as if she scarcely understood what he meant. She had shuddered for an instant as he spoke of his murdered son, and then she thought that she had not comprehended him—that she must be dreaming: and she looked as if she were so.

"And I, Mrs. Lonsdale," said the gentleman who accompanied the Baronet, "have come likewise to offer you a home. You know me not—but when you do come to know me, you will learn that I am a man of honor—of a certain social standing—and with high rank in perspective. I have heard enough of your sad story to experience an immense interest on your behalf. In a short time I shall lead to the altar a young lady who possesses a heart that will cherish the kindest sympathies for you. Her home is not far distant; and thither do I offer to conduct you, in the full confidence that you will meet a cordial welcome. My name is Reginald Herbert: I am the nephew of Lord Stanfield; and it is to Clive Hall that I purpose to escort yourself and that sweet boy of yours."

If Lucy had not comprehended all that the Baronet said,—not a single word on the other hand which Mr. Herbert had uttered, was lost upon her; and she perceived by his tone, by his look, and by his language, that Providence had sent her a generous friend in him. For the moment she was recalled as it were from the numbness of her sorrow to reflect that she herself might not be long in this world, and that it would savor of ingratitude towards Heaven itself not to accept whatsoever bounties might be available for her son. She knew that the Selwyns, though comfortable in circumstances, were yet living by their own industry—and that she ought not to suffer herself and little Frederick to become burdens upon them: she feared, too, that notwithstanding her widowhood and her son's orphaned state, her own father's door would continue closed against them. So her mind, having achieved this rapid survey of all circumstances during a brief interval of remarkable clearness, was speedily made up.

Rising from her seat, which she had hitherto maintained, she bent her looks upon the Baronet and said, "Sir Archibald Redburn, if you are unhappy I will not add to your afflictions by any reproaches from my lips. Let it be



sufficient for me to declare that were I and my boy starving, and did you proffer us a morsel of bread, and the boy in the rabid eagerness of famine placed it to his lips, I would snatch it from him—I would trample it in the mire—even though the want of it were to make him perish the next instant before my eyes!"

The Baronet groaned in the bitterness of his anguish: for he felt—deeply, deeply felt—how well deserved was this response from the lips of that much injured woman.

"Mr. Herbert," she almost immediately said, turning towards Reginald, "the thanks of a heart-broken widow and of a poor fatherless boy are your due. Accept them—accept them, as the only return for the noble generosity of your conduct. And I on my part accept for myself and this dear boy the home which you have offered us. But not to-day can we go: hence—nor to-morrow——"

"I understand you, Mrs. Lonsdale," said Herbert. "On Monday, at eleven o'clock, there will be a post-chaise at the door of this house to bear you both to your new home. Sir Archibald Redburn, we will depart."

Lucy extended her hand to Mr. Herbert; and as he held it he said in a voice that was broken by his feelings, "My Adela shall cherish you as a sister." He then turned hastily to little Frederick, took him up in his arms, and kissed him with almost a father's warmth; and as he retreated precipitately from the room, the boy wiped away the tear-drops that the generous-hearted Reginald had left upon his pale cheeks.

Sir Archibald Redburn—a crushed, broken-hearted, miserable man—dragged himself away in Herbert's footsteps: the widow and the orphan were once more alone together.

An hour afterwards Reginald Herbert again leapt off his horse at the entrance to Clive Hall. Immediately after the scenes at the barracks, the officers of justice had been sent thither to ensure the safe custody of the monster-looking man; and Reginald had despatched by them a hastily written note to the Countess of Burton, outlining what had taken place. As the reader may suppose, the inmates of the Hall were thrown into a perfect state of consternation on learning that there was a murderer beneath that roof; and when Herbert reached the mansion, he found that the excitement and dismay had but little abated.

It was now past two o'clock in the afternoon: and the suspected murderer was only just returning to such a state of consciousness as to have any recollection of what had happened to him. Some hours back—indeed, very soon after Reginald's speedy departure with the official despatch for Middleton,—medical assistance had arrived at the Hall; and everything requisite was done for the miserable wretch. When the officers of justice reached the mansion, the surgeon declared that it would be immediate death to remove the prisoner—that he must remain at least for a few more hours where he was, if not until the following day; and the constables were accordingly located amongst the domestics,—there being no need for them to keep watch in the captive's room, as he was chained to his bed by a bond

even firmer than human hands could have rivetted upon him.

Reginald Herbert, on returning to Clive Hall, explained more in detail than his note had previously done to the Countess and Adela, the sad things which had transpired at Middleton; and he recited all he had heard respecting the melancholy history of poor Lonsdale. Even before he mentioned the proposition which he had taken upon himself to submit to that unfortunate widow, in respect to a home for herself and son,—Adela, with generous enthusiasm, and with the tears streaming down her cheeks, exclaimed, as she seized the hand of the Countess, "Mother—dear mother, is there naught which your heart suggests in respect to those poor creatures?"

Then Herbert at once went on to explain what he had done; and he not merely received the approval of Adela and the Countess, but likewise their thanks that he should have enlisted them in the same Christian service which he himself had so nobly undertaken.

Mr. Herbert, leaving the drawing-room where this discourse had taken place with the two ladies, was proceeding to the monster-looking man's chamber, in order to learn whether he had come completely back to consciousness, and whether he had made any confession,—when he met one of the constables issuing thence.

"It is all right, sir," said the officer: "the fellow is recovering rapidly—he is able to speak—and the gallows won't be cheated of its due."

"Has he avowed his crime?" inquired Reginald hastily.

"He has—and glories in it," answered the officer.

"The miscreant!" ejaculated Herbert, with a shudder.

"But what's more," proceeded the constable, "he turns out to be an old acquaintance of mine—though I never should have recognized him in the awful object he has become. He was condemned about two years ago at Middleton to transportation; and he escaped on his way to the convict-ship."

"Then who is he?" asked Reginald Herbert.

"His name is Obadiah Bates," replied the constable.

## CHAPTER XLII

OBADIAH BATES.

YES—the monster-looking man was none other than the reader's old acquaintance, the barber of Oakleigh; and we will at once proceed to give certain explanations in respect to the criminal career of the miscreant.

The reader has seen how, on obtaining possession of the post-office, he tampered with the letters in a variety of ways—and in one especially, to execute that diabolical deed of treachery which brought Frederick Lonsdale from Calais, and led him into the trap set to catch him at Dover. That letter, which pur-

ported to emanate from Mrs. Davis, was written by some female at Middleton, with whom the barber was acquainted, and whose epistolary qualifications were of a much higher standard than her moral ones. He had sought her co-operation in that particular scheme;—and with the certainty of obtaining the reward offered for the deserter's apprehension, he had recompensed the woman liberally. When he was apprehended and condemned to transportation, he received in Middleton gaol, as the reader is aware, that bitter letter which Lonsdale wrote, and which excited all the most horrible vindictive passions of Bates's mind. We need not enter into details respecting his escape; suffice it to remark that he effected it,—and in order to secure himself against the chance of being retaken, he had recourse to the desperate expedient of disfiguring his countenance by means of vitriol. The application of the corrosive fluid was however attended by effects more terrible than he had calculated upon,—depriving him of the sight of one of his eyes. Nevertheless, he consoled himself with the reflection that the destruction of his identity was all the more complete; and when he looked at his face in the glass, he knew full well that not even those who had known him best, would recognize Obadiah Bates in the monstrous loathsome object which he had become. He wrote to Mrs. Lonsdale at Manchester, to tell her that her husband had been branded; and of that husband he signed himself "the eternal enemy."

Shortly afterwards he proceeded to Manchester, with the hope of finding opportunities to wreak his vengeance upon the objects of his hatred. His deplorable condition—the wretchedness to which he was reduced—the means by which he was saved from starvation by some factory slaves—and the accident that led him to seek refuge in the house which Chancery delays were suffering to fall into ruins, are already known to the reader: for when chance one night threw Bates in the way of Gerald Redburn, those particulars of his narrative which the wretch volunteered, were strictly true. All of a sudden he found himself possessed of the wished-for opportunities, as he calculated and hoped, to wreak his vengeance. The vile beings of this world are never at a loss where to find creatures of a kindred villany when their co-operation is required; it needs but to plunge into the cesspools of vice and demoralization to discover such ready and willing agents. Thus was it that Obadiah Bates found in the keeper of an infamous house the accomplice that he sought. Lucy was enticed thither—Redburn received a note to bid him hasten to where he might seize upon his prey—and Bates felt assured that the dishonor of Lonsdale's wife would be effected by violence. But this was not all the vengeance he meditated; his plan was twofold—the blow was to strike not merely the Lonsdales, but Gerald Redburn himself; and hence the note which Bates sent to warn the husband of his wife's danger: hence too his apparent zeal in conducting Lonsdale to the house where he was to find Lucy and Redburn. For Bates calculated that when Lonsdale, on bursting abruptly into the room which was so par-

ticularly pointed out to him, should discover that his wife's ruin had been accomplished, he would immolate Redburn to his rage. All these diabolical hopes on the miscreant's part were however frustrated: for Lucy was rescued in time, and Redburn escaped with his life. Why was it that the fiendish vindictiveness of Bates was thus directed against Gerald Redburn as well as against the Lonsdales? It was because Sir Archibald Redburn was one of those who had effected the exposure, the ruin, and the condemnation of Bates, in respect to the letter-tamperings at the post-office, and therefore he sought to revenge himself against the sire by levelling a blow at the son.

We need not linger upon our narrative in order to describe how, during the interval of more than eighteen months after the transactions at Manchester, Obadiah Bates became a wretched wanderer over the face of the country. At last he read in a newspaper that a General Court-Martial had just been held on private Frederick Lonsdale at the Middleton Barracks, and that the accused was found guilty and condemned to death. Bates chuckled with a savage gloating over this intelligence, and resolved to be present at the final scene—or at least near it. He felt assured that he could venture with perfect safety into a neighborhood where he had once been well known: for General Redburn had not recognized him at Manchester—Lonsdale had not recognized him—and others of his old acquaintances, whom he had occasionally met in his wanderings, had likewise failed to discern the identity of Obadiah Bates with the hideous object he had rendered himself. He pursued his weary way—night came—and at about eleven o'clock he was within a few miles of Middleton. That night, as the reader will remember, was brilliantly illuminated with moon and stars: and thus, when an officer on horseback happened to overtake Bates on the road, the miscreant had no difficulty in at once recognizing Captain Redburn. A diabolical thought flashed to his mind in a moment; and it instantaneously became a purpose which he resolved to execute. He was penniless and starving—Redburn was sure to have money about his person. Moreover there was yet a vengeance to be wreaked against the sire: why not wreak it, as formerly attempted, through the medium of the son?

With the suddenness and fury of a famished tiger darting at its prey, did Bates spring at Gerald Redburn, who was walking his horse at the moment. The steed, terrified at that precipitate Rush towards it, shied abruptly—one of the stirrup-leathers broke, and Redburn was hurled to the ground, while the horse galloped madly away. Then commenced a desperate struggle: Gerald managed to regain his legs; and drawing his sword, inflicted a couple of severe wounds upon his assailant. Bates however succeeded in wresting the weapon from his grasp; and holding it by the blade, he dealt a terrific blow with the hilt on the side of Redburn's head. The victim fell: but the infuriated Bates continued to beat him with the sword-hilt till he was quite certain life was extinct. He then threw the weapon into the ditch and proceeded to rifle the pockets of the mur-



ered man. Scarcely however had he possessed himself of a packet and a purse, when he thought he heard footsteps approaching; and hastily dragging the body to the ditch, he lowered it in. Then, turning off into the fields, he sped across them for a considerable distance; till at length well nigh exhausted with loss of blood and the fatigues he had suffered during the day, he sat down to rest himself. There he examined the purse, and found that its contents were ample enough to seem a perfect treasure in the eyes of a man who was penniless a short time before. Next he opened the despatch; and by aid of the brilliant moonlight, he was enabled to read its contents. A reprieve for Lonsdale who he had hoped was to be executed on the following morning! The vile heart of Bates bounded in his breast. With one blow he had wreaked a two-fold vengeance,—vengeance against the Redburns—vengeance against Lonsdale, for whom no reprieve should come!

He was about to take the money out of the purse, so that he might fling the purse itself away,—and he likewise contemplated tearing up the despatch into fragments,—when he thought he beheld forms moving about at the farther extremity of the field in which he had paused to rest. Doubtless they were only phantoms conjured up by the man's guilty fears: but they had the effect of making him resume his precipitate flight. Accordingly, having hastily secured the purse and the despatch in his pockets, he sped across the meadows until he reached a road, where he again found himself so exhausted that he was compelled to sit down.—There it was that Reginald Herbert encountered and relieved him. Bates knew that the road led away from Middleton, which place it was now his object to avoid rather than to seek; and he dragged himself along as well as he was able. Thus did he proceed a few miles, until he could go no farther. He was now in the immediate vicinage of Clive Hall, which was known to him: he crept into the shed, where he was subsequently discovered, and lay down with the intention of resting himself for a couple of hours, and then resuming his journey. But when sleep fell upon him, the cold paralyzed his limbs—and exhaustion through loss of blood, aided to prolong his slumber, which, deepening into total unconsciousness, would have speedily terminated in death, had he not been found and kindly treated in the manner already described.

The preceding explanations were gathered from him partially during the few hours that he remained at Clive Hall after his restoration to consciousness, and partially some weeks later, when in the condemned cell at Middleton, and on the eve of expiating his crimes on the gallows, he filled up whatsoever gaps had remained in his previous avowals. Not that he confessed anything in the spirit of contrition: he remained hardened until the very last; and when he spoke of his misdeeds, it was only to gloat over the wrongs he had made others experience, and the vengeance he had consummated.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

## CONCLUSION.

THE reader will not be satisfied unless we furnish him with a few particulars respecting the most prominent characters that, having figured in our narrative, yet remain to be disposed of.

And first of Lucy's father. We have already stated that this man became a confirmed drunkard. The habit of intemperance grew upon him with an inveteracy that at length it might be literally said he was never sober. He took no note of what was passing in the world around him—but abandoned himself completely to strong liquor. It was not till nearly a month after his son-in-law's execution that the circumstance accidentally reached his ears: for Sarah Bodkin, who lived with him as his house-keeper, studiously concealed the occurrence as long as she was able, for fear lest his heart should be touched with remorse and melt towards his daughter, in which case her own influence over the wretched man might be destroyed. For the same object did she intercept and suppress a touching and affectionate letter which Lucy wrote to her sire about a week after the tragedy that deprived her of a husband and her son of a father. Davis was too much lost to the sense of external circumstances to be moved either to savage joy or remorseful pity, when he did at length hear of Lonsdale's death; and he continued his inebriate habits as usual. Sarah Bodkin, having first obtained an immense influence over him, ultimately endeavored to induce him to make a will in her favor; and this he agreed to do. But the woman fancied that he might yet live some years, during which a reconciliation with his daughter and the reversal of the will were things quite within the chapter of accidents: so she thought of persuading him to sell out his money from the funds and keep it all in a strong-box at home. For this she urged various reasons, which were of course unfounded enough, but quite sufficient to operate as she desired on the embriated and attenuated mind of the wretched sot. He accordingly did as she suggested; and the transaction was effected through the medium of a solicitor at Coventry, where Davis resided. But not many days after the whole amount was paid over to the miserable drunkard, Sarah Bodkin endeavored to decamp with the strong-box. By a combination of circumstances, which we need not pause to describe, she was detected and stopped by some of the neighbors who had found out what was going on. When in prison, she manifested an exceeding bitterness against Davis, who had been persuaded to prosecute her, and who even kept himself moderately sober for the purpose. In order to spite him, she confessed that she had committed perjury in the matter of the trial against Gerald Redburn, and that she had been suborned to do it by Davis himself.

These facts came to the ears of Mr. Colycinth, who in the meanwhile had removed from Oakleigh and settled at Coventry by aid of the five thousand pounds received from Sir Archibald

Redburn to keep Aunt Jane's secret. On learning the revelations made by Sarah Bodkin, Mr. Colycynth at once moved in the matter; and the result was the complete establishment of his daughter Kitty's innocence so far as the graver imputation was concerned—thus leaving her only amenable to public opinion on the score of a giddy imprudence. A criminal prosecution was at once instituted by Mr. Colycynth against Davis for subornation of perjury; and he was conveyed to jail. There, however, he died in a few days,—died in the arms of that daughter whom he had discarded—whom he had treated so cruelly—but who nevertheless flew to him on the wings of filial love the instant his downfall reached her ears. In his supreme moments he repented of the past, and surrendered up his breath while entreating the forgiveness of his daughter and invoking blessings on her head.

Sarah Bodkin was convicted of the attempt at robbery, and was sentenced to a term of imprisonment,—at the expiration of which she fell into the most abandoned ways and became another item in the immense aggregate of female depravity which constitutes the shame of civilization and the scandal of Christendom.

Miss Redburn—otherwise called "Aunt Jane"—experienced a very long and severe illness as the consequence of the cruel excitement she had undergone at the time her son was condemned to death. For weeks she continued unconscious of what was passing around her,—sometimes plunged into stupor, and at others raving in delirium. When she recovered full possession of her mental faculties, the fatal intelligence was gradually broken to her that Lonsdale had ceased to exist. She thus found that her secret was known to her brother and her sister-in-law; but a long time elapsed ere she exerted herself sufficiently to ask for explanations how it had transpired. She was smitten with the direst remorse, which was not even mitigated by the cynical temperament of her mind. For the death of Gerald she shed not a single tear—she breathed no word of regret: but for that of her son her grief was more bitter than could possibly have been expected after the long years of heart-hardening through which she had passed. But she lived on for several years more,—her reflections constituting a martyrdom which nevertheless was only a too well-deserved punishment for the cruel abandonment of the offspring of her girlhood's illicit love. But from the date of those incidents at the Manor House which brought her secret to light, she never again set foot within the walls of Oakleigh Church: she never again met Mr. Arden face to face. During the last few years of her life, which only terminated recently, she confined herself almost exclusively to her own chamber at the Manor: for by some means or another—most probably from the Colycynths—her story got whispered abroad—it ceased to continue a secret—and she dared not stand the chance of encountering even the humblest villager of Oakleigh who might point to her as the unnatural mother that had never shown the slightest care for her son until it became too late to care for him at all.

As for Mr. Arden—he continued to reside at Oakleigh; and though after a time it came to his knowledge that rumor was whispering unpleasant things in respect to the past, yet he never by word or look afforded the slightest evidence that he was aware of what was thus said to his disparagement: but regularly as the Sabbath-day came round, did he ascend the pulpit and preach in a style as if his own life had been so stainless and immaculate as to exemplify in himself the value of the precepts which he enforced.

Reginald Herbert conducted the beauteous Adela Clive to the altar about six months after the occurrences which have been so fully detailed in the last few chapters. Their union has proved a happy one—their wedded life a scene of felicity as little interrupted by worldly cares as can possibly be the lot of the most favored of this world's denizens. Some few years after their marriage, the death of his uncle put Reginald in possession of the family title and estates; and, as Lord Stansfield, his conduct in the House of Peers affords a striking and pleasing contrast with that of the generality of the haughty and intolerant nobles constituting that branch of the Legislature.

Sir Archibald Redburn did not live long after the terrible events which occurred at Middleton. For some three or four years he dragged on a miserable existence, taking no pleasure in anything—brooding gloomily over the past—shunning all society—and wasting away physically as the process of a breaking heart conducted him towards the grave. Lady Redburn, at first distracted by the death of her son, gradually fell into a state of almost complete idiocy; and thus she lived until a year or two back, when she sank out of a state of existence which for a long period had been but a miserable blank.

Colonel Wyndham was compelled, by increasing pecuniary embarrassments, to leave the Army some two or three years after the tragic occurrence at Middleton: but in recompense for the "signal services" which he rendered to the cause of "law and order" by the massacre of the working classes with the bayonets of his troops, the Government found for him a lucrative sinecure appointment; and some time afterwards the sudden and unexpected death of a noble relative elevated him to the Peerage. He now sits in the House of Lords, and signalizes himself by the most virulent and rabid opposition to every measure which has for its object the elevation of the industrious orders. If ever the subject of military flogging be brought up, it is certain to find a staunch and strenuous advocate in him; and he is ready with a dozen instances to prove that the discipline of the Army could not be maintained without it. But in the opposite sense, his memory is conveniently faulty: for he never alludes to the case of Frederick Lonsdale.

Sergeant-Major Langley, having received a little windfall in the shape of a legacy, bequeathed him by a brother who was better off in the world than himself, retired from the Army and embarked his little capital in a public-house, situated in one of the *not* very respectable



quarters of London. He however proved the most constant patron of his own malt and spirituous liquors; and what with inattention to business through his intemperate habits, and the fierce competition of a rival establishment, Mr. Langley in due time found himself utterly ruined. The brewers and distillers, who held his lease and a warrant of attorney over his goods, took possession of everything—while a couple of Sheriffs' officers seized Mr. Langley's portly person and bore him away to Whitecross-Street Prison. Thence he emerged after awhile by passing through the Insolvents' Court; and on thus obtaining his release, he sank down into a very degraded condition, his entire dependence being the wretched pittance of a pension he received from the Government. He continued for a few years to haunt the tap-room of the public-house where he had once presided as the master; and there might he have been seen, spending his money freely when he had any—cadging for beer and tobacco when he had none—and telling the most marvellous tales of his travels and his exploits to all who would listen to him. At length he received an unlucky blow on the head from a quart pot that was flung in a drunken row; and being taken to the hospital, he died in a few days. Thus ignominiously perished the once magniloquent and redoubtable Sergeant Langley.

Lucy and her boy found a home at Clive Hall, and kind friends in those who were so generously interested in their behalf. The death of Mr. Davis shortly afterwards, put Lucy in possession of the house at Coventry where her father had

dwelt, and which he had purchased,—together with three thousand pounds in ready money. She accordingly took up her abode there, to devote herself to the education of her son. But it was destined that the widow and the orphan of the murdered soldier were not much longer to breathe the air of this world: the former had received a shock which it was impossible for one who had loved so tenderly and so well, to surmount—and the seeds of decline slowly developed themselves on the part of the latter. Three years after Lonsdale's execution, Lucy was stretched upon the bed of death: but kind friends were there—and in her last moments she was solaced by the assurance of Reginald and Adela that her son should again find a home with them and become the object of their tender care. Alas! she little thought how soon that well-beloved boy would be laid beside her in the silent grave!—she knew not that the hues upon his cheeks were the death-roses of consumption! She expired in the hope that he might live long to experience a happier destiny than his unfortunate sire had known; and her remains were consigned to the same grave where her husband lay in the churchyard at Middleton. Within two years from the *second* date graven on the stone which marked the resting-place of Frederick and Lucy Lonsdale, the sod was removed again—the earth was thrown up—the pit was hollowed to receive another shrouded slumberer—and a *third* name was now inscribed upon the head-stone. Need we say whose name it was? The son lay sleeping with his parents!

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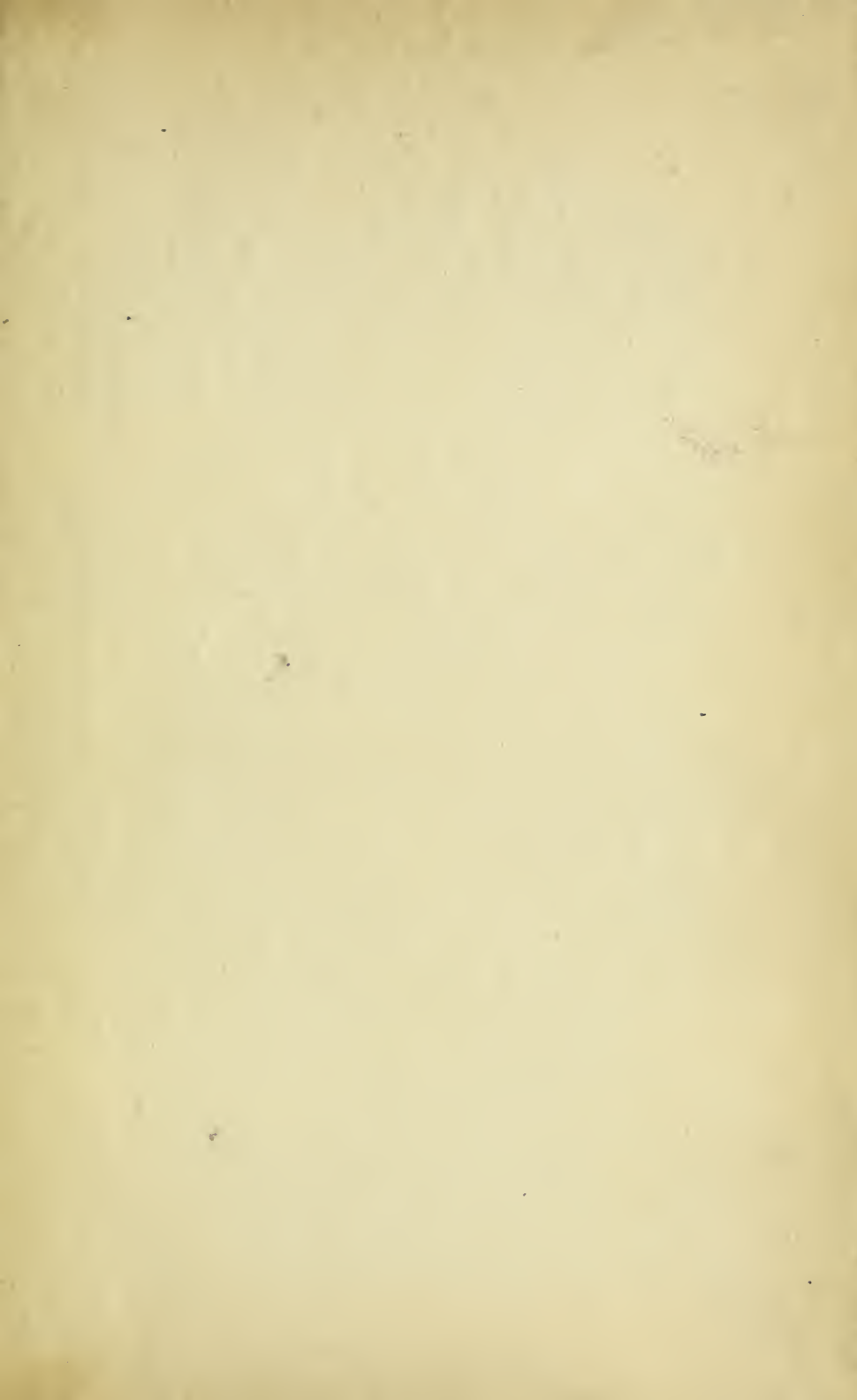
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